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WHERE DOES THE SKY BEGIN

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BY

WASHINGTON GLADDEN

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WHERE DOES THE SKY BEGIN

I

WHERE DOES THE SKY BEGIN

Where is the way to the dwelling of light,
And as for darkness, where is the place thereof;
That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof,
And that thou shouldest discern the paths to the house thereof?
JOB xxxviii. 19, 20.

THESE are part of the words by which, in the great dramatic poem of the Old Testament, Jehovah answers Job, out of the whirlwind and the thundercloud. The whole mighty message is a reproof of the temerity of man in judging God. The vastness of man's ignorance, the multitude of the things happening all about him which he can neither control nor explain, — these are set before him in a series of splendid pictures, that humility and docility may be suggested to him. Among these challenges and questionings his thought is turned more than once to the upper realms, to the wonder and mystery of the sky: —

"Which is the way to the place where the light is?

. . . . . .

Who hath cleft a channel for the water-flood,

Or a way for the lightning of the thunder?

. . . . . .

Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades,
Or loose the bands of Orion?
Canst thou lead forth the signs of the Zodiac in their season?
Or canst thou guide the Bear with her train?
Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens?
Canst thou establish the dominion thereof in the earth?"

The thought of Job is directed by these inquiries to the immensity and the splendor of the kingdoms of the air; to their relation to the solid land which they overhang and encompass; to the part which they play in the life of man. No scientific or philosophical account of them is attempted; their phenomena alone are displayed before the imagination.

To these phenomena the eyes of the children of men have been wonderingly lifted ever since that dateless dawn when the morning stars first sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Many and ingenious have been the explanations given of things visible over our heads. The first chapter of Genesis clearly conveys to us the conception of the ancient Hebrews, which was not unlike that of the ancient Greeks and of the Romans also. What we call the sky, the blue vault overhead, the Hebrews called the firmament. They thought that a canopy of solid crystal or translucent metal was stretched above the earth; that was the name they gave it. The word denotes solidity, united with expansion and tenuity. Thus

Elihu, in the chapter of Job which precedes that from which the text is taken, speaks of Jehovah as having "spread out the sky" (rather *hammered* it out), "which is strong as a molten mirror." This firm roof above the solid earth carried on its upper surface a vast ocean of water; the writer of Genesis says that "it divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament." The firmament was supported by the mountains standing at the ends of the earth, — at the extremities of the vast plain which the ancients supposed the earth to be. In this crystal roof were many windows and doors, which were opened to let the rain and the snow descend. The sun, moon, and stars were set or fixed in this firmament, driven into it, as nails, or hung upon it, as lamps. When, in some great cataclysm, the "powers of the heavens were shaken," these lights might be loosened and fall down. The clouds were vapors that gathered under this roof and sometimes hid it from the sight of men.

Among the Hebrews, as among the other ancient peoples, clearer astronomical ideas gradually appeared, and the earlier conceptions survived only as symbols or metaphors; but there is no doubt that we have, in the first chapters of Genesis, the explanation of the phenomena of the sky which was current in the days of Abraham and Moses.

We need not tarry over the theories which have

been evolved in the passing ages from human brains, and dissolved by the progress of knowledge; over the Apollonian epicycles or the Ptolemaic mazes; the genius of Copernicus solved for us the mighty problem, and the phenomena of the world above our heads are now fairly understood by most of us. Still there linger upon our lips forms of speech by which old conceptions are perpetuated, and we find ourselves thinking and speaking in terms which will hardly bear analysis.

What, for example, do we mean by the sky? What are the boundaries of the sky? Where does it begin?

I am not asking you to entertain that great conception of unlimited space through which our earth and all the other heavenly bodies move; I am speaking only of the phenomenal sky which always overspreads that portion of the earth where we are dwelling, which reaches from the one horizon to the other. The word sky meant, in the old English, a cloud; so Chaucer sometimes uses it; but in the usage of our later English it is thus defined in a recent lexicon: —

"The region of clouds, wind, and rain; that part of the earth's atmosphere in which meteorological phenomena take place; often used in the plural. The apparent arch or vault of heaven which in a clear day is of a blue color; the firmament; often used in the plural."

This is sufficiently precise and scientific; we all understand it. With this definition in our minds, let us ask once more, Where does the sky begin?

I am sure that our thought at once begins to mount upward. It begins somewhere above us, as we conceive it. Perhaps we have not tried to fix any better boundary for it. Our hymns and poems speak of ascending to the skies; of mounting to the sky; of climbing to the sky; and our customary use of the word carries us away upward to some region far over our heads. We do, indeed, apply the word "sky-scraper" in a humorous way to our tall buildings; that is one of our exaggerations; we like to speak of these buildings as so lofty that they pierce the sky. Perhaps we should all consent to the idea that the entire region of the upper air above the tops of the tallest mountains might be regarded as the sky. But if any proposition to transfer ourselves to the sky should be made to us, we should begin to wonder where we could find a ladder like Jacob's on which we could climb, or an airship or balloon by which we could ascend to that unknown region. What manner of people we should be if we lived in the sky we cannot quite imagine; wings, of course, would be indispensable.

What, now, is the simple, solid, scientific fact? It is that we are all dwellers in the sky. We have lived in it all our lives, and could not live anywhere else. The tallest ladder and the most buoyant air-

ship would take us no nearer to it than we are at this moment. It is not the Matterhorn or Mont Blanc alone that the sky kisses; the lowliest mound lies always in its loving embrace. The poor man's cabin, not less than the millionaire's twenty-five story block, lifts its roof into the sky. It is not Phaëton alone, or Santos-Dumont, who travels through the sky; the steamship divides the sky when she ploughs the wave; the swift railway train is rushing through it; the fine lady in her coach moves gracefully in the same element; the working-man, going every morning with his dinner-pail to his daily toil, is walking through the sky! Earth-plodders are we all? Yea, and something more, if we only knew it! Not one of us who is not through all his days on earth a denizen of the sky!

I am speaking, of course, of the simple physical fact. The inferior boundary of our sky can be no other than the surface of the earth on which we tread. All above the ground is sky. There can be no middle term between the two. Atmosphere and light, these are the elements of which the sky is composed, and there is no division, real or imaginary, by which some realm above is separated from the realm below. The atmosphere is less dense as we ascend, but it is the same atmosphere. The vapors which it bears, when they are condensed in the upper air, we call clouds; in the lower air we name them fogs, but there is no difference; a cloud is a

fog above the ground; a fog is a cloud upon the ground; the sky has not fallen, as the ancients feigned or feared, for its hither limit always is the earth.

Nay, I think that if we wish to tell the whole scientific truth we must go a little deeper, and say that the sky is always seeking even lower levels. For there is not a cellar or a cavern or a mine into which it does not penetrate. If it cannot carry its torch of light into these recesses, its vital breath descends, contending there for the mastery with the gases that the earth engenders. If men live at all in those underground fastnesses, they live upon the bounty of the sky, which follows them and ministers to their life.

More than this, it is the chemistry of air and light which turns the barren rock into the soil in which all the kingdoms of plant-life are nourished. It is the action of this atmospheric envelope upon the surface of the earth which makes the earth habitable. The heavens, the physical heavens, are always mingling themselves with the earth, and subduing the earth to the uses of living beings. In every particle of the mould on which we walk are elements borrowed from the sky. It is the nurse if not the mother of all green things growing; its vitalizing elements enter into all living tissues; its tides of energy are dancing in our own veins. In it, as the constant physical manifestation of the

"creator-spirit," who is the Lord and giver of life, we live and move and have our being.

Where does the sky begin? It begins in the dust of the pavement, in the roots of the grass, at the threshold of the lips which drink its life or fashion its waves into speech or song, at the portals of the eye which receives its messages of light. It is the medium and minister of life through every moment of our earthly existence.

Is this, to any of you, a new way of thinking about these things? If so, what is its significance? How does it differ from the conceptions which are traditional and familiar? Simply in this, that it removes an imaginary and unreal boundary line which separated the sky from our world, and made it something remote and almost preternatural, whereas it is the one thing of which we have immediate and constant experience; the most common, homely, every-day fact with which we have to do. It is a frequent error of ours — this by which we draw lines of demarcation through realms that cannot be divided, and shut out of our lives by definition that which ought to be the most vital and inspiring truth in our experience. Even as we are in the habit of thinking of the sky as of some region far above us to which we must fly or climb, so we are in the habit of conceiving many of the present realities of our lives as interests or experiences that are a long way off, that belong to some other state

of being, into which we can enter only by long journeying or laborious climbing.

I remember hearing an evangelist, at an evening meeting where a solemn hymn had been sung, of which the refrain was "Eternity! eternity!" break the silence which followed the singing by the impressive question, "Where will you spend it?" The purpose of the question was laudable, yet it conveyed an idea which most of his hearers already held, and of which it would have been well if they could have been disabused, — that eternity is a tract of duration lying wholly on the other side of death. If they had been asked where eternity begins, most of them would have promptly answered, "At death." The common conception is that the grave is the point at which time ends and eternity begins. But time does not end, neither does eternity begin; and there is great moral as well as metaphysical confusion in conceiving of any such boundary line. The proper question about eternity is not "Where *will* you spend it?" — as if the entrance upon it were a future experience, — but rather "When and how ARE you spending it?" The eternal life is not a life which a man begins to live after he passes out of this world; if he hopes to live it at all he ought to be living it now. It is not only true metaphysically that eternity, by the very definition of it, cannot have a future beginning, — that it must include the present moment, — it is also true morally

that the kind of life which is in its nature unending, the kind of life which possesses the power of continuance, is a kind of life which has just as much to do with the present moment as with any future moment of duration. If one is living it now, no questions need be asked about the future; that will take care of itself; and to the one who refuses to live it now, expectations about the future are vain.

Nay, let us not forget that all the realities of eternity, all the motives of eternity, are gathered up in the experience of the present hour. It is of the very nature of moral conduct that eternity is involved in it. The simplest decision between right and wrong sets in motion causes which act and react upon the character forever. If you do the thing you ought to do, that deed is an everlasting fact; it belongs to your character; the value of it can never be taken from you. If you fail to do the thing you ought to do, that deed undone is an everlasting failure; it subtracts so much from the sum of good that might have been yours; to all eternity you will be so much the poorer for that omission. Other things you may do, but not that thing. Eternity is thus the coefficient of every moral choice.

If man is made for a life that has no term, and if there is a genetic relation between his moral actions, so that he reaps what he sows, so that the deeds of to-day are seeds from which to-morrow's harvest grows, and if this goes on and on indefi-

nitely, then it is evident that we are living this minute the life of eternity, and Goethe's solemn words, as Carlyle interprets them, come home to us with tremendous meaning : —

> "Heard are the voices,
> Heard are the sages,
> The worlds, and the ages:
> Choose well! Your choice is
> Brief and yet endless."

Thus we see that our whole moral life must be estimated, as the logicians say, *sub specie æternitatis ;* that element enters into the whole of it ; eternity has the same relation to this day and this hour that the ocean has to the child's well in the sand of the beach. The rewards of eternity and the retributions of eternity are not to begin by and by ; they are now in full operation ; they are working themselves out in your character.

This means, of course, that heaven and hell are not distant facts, but present facts. The same illusion which makes us conceive of the sky as beginning somewhere above the range of the mountain-tops makes us put the realities of heaven and hell away to other places and future periods. But it is no more certain that the sky comes down to the ground and that we are always walking in it, than that heaven and hell are immediate and inescapable realities. Fundamentally, essentially, they are states of being ; we do not get into them or out of them by going up

or down, east or west, north or south; we change our sky, said the Romans, but not our minds. And it is in the mind, the character, that the essential fact of heaven or hell is found.

If heaven has not begun for you already it is idle for you to be looking forward to some future day or some distant place when it will begin. And the discontent, the unrest, the envy, the jealousy, the bitterness, the groveling mind, the perverse will, the unsocial temper, — if these are your present experiences, they have only to continue and become chronic to make a hell more dread than Milton ever painted.

The vision of God, the beatific vision, — where does that begin? When shall we stand in his presence and look upon his face and rejoice in his love? We are waiting for the day when this shall be revealed. We are thinking of a place where He shall be made known to us. But is not the same illusion here, also, blinding us to the greatest facts of our daily lives?

It is not, surely, a novel conception that God is always near, always accessible, always in vital communication with our spirits. Of one of the earliest of the Biblical heroes we are told that he walked with God; that seems to imply a real presence of God in his daily life. And the psalmist cries: —

> "Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
> Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
> If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:

If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me,
And the light about me shall be night;
Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day:
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

The presence of God in his life seems to have been a real experience of this psalmist. For most of us, I fear, this has become a kind of scholastic or dogmatic formula; we have turned the experience into a creed and believe in the omnipresence of God which is a kind of diffusion of infinite force through space; and in his omniscience which represents to us an infinite detective agency, rather than a personal and spiritual friendship. But surely the psalmists who speak in such warm and tender ways of the nearness of God to them meant something other than this; and Jesus, in the many words that testify to his immediate knowledge of the Father, makes us see that communion with God is not a boon to be awaited, but an experience to be enjoyed. It is true, as Paul says, that "now we know in part;" nevertheless we know. Our spiritual nature is so imperfectly developed that we are not so sensitive as we ought to be to the Presence which at every moment envelops us. Our partial knowledge is our own defect.

> "God is not dumb, that he should speak no more ;
> If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
> And findest not Sinai, 't is thy soul is poor ;
> There towers the Mountain of the Voice no less,
> Which whoso seeks shall find."

In two ways, at least, if we only had eyes to see and ears to hear, the Presence of God would be made known to us.

We should discern Him, first, in the common life of man ; we should find reflections of his truth and love in the characters and deeds of the people round about us, from the humblest to the most exalted. For even as the physical heavens mingle with the substance of the earth to make it fruitful and habitable, to give life to the seed and beauty to the flower, — even as the physical sky comes down to the ground and organizes here the kingdoms of life, — so the spiritual influences of the world of light and life are always descending upon the human race and organizing among men the heavenly society. In human hearts, in human lives, in human institutions God is always dwelling and revealing Himself. With much that is of the earth earthy divine grace is always mingled, and disfigured ; we need anointed eyes to discern it ; to the insight of love alone it is visible ; one must be born from above that he may be able to see the kingdom of God, mingling as the leaven mingles, silently but pervasively, with the whole life of man. But it is here,

if we only have eyes to see it; we need not climb, nor fly; we have only to keep our hearts in tune and its sweet breath will make heavenly music in them. Every day some loyalty that is born of God, some kindness that his love has kindled, some truth that his spirit has begotten, some parental love that is the reflection of his fatherhood, some filial devotion that is the response to his call greets us, as we go on our way, and tells us more clearly than the voice which spoke from the burning bush that God is round about us, revealing Himself in the thoughts and words and deeds of his children on the earth.

But closer than this is the personal touch of his spirit upon our spirits.

> "No man can think nor in himself perceive,
> Sometimes at waking, in the street sometimes,
> Or on the hillside, always unforewarned,
> A grace of being finer than himself
> That beckons and is gone, — a larger life
> Upon his own impinging, with swift glimpse
> Of spacious circles luminous with mind,
> To which the ethereal substance of his own
> Seems but gross cloud to make that visible,
> Touched to a sudden glory round the edge."

It is these "visitations fleet" — too fleet, alas! with most of us, — because we have not learned to woo and hold them — that make our lives sublime; because they reveal to us the Presence who communed with Abram at the tent door, and with Jacob at Bethel, and with Jesus on the Mount of Trans-

figuration, and who is surely not less near to men to-day than in those olden times.

It is here, at the very heart of it, that our religion is feeble and uncertain. The one thing that we fail to realize is the nearness, the immediateness of God. We keep conceiving that He is far away,—that some climbing or traveling must be done to reduce the distance; that somebody, evangelist, prophet, mediator of some sort must go and fetch Him; we do not comprehend that He is as sure to occupy the heart that will just make room for Him, as the air is to occupy all open spaces. That is all that is needed — to make room for Him; to open the thought and the desire to his influence. You have no more need to call and plead with God that He will come to you than you have to climb up and bring the sky down into your garden. "Whosoever," says Dean Fremantle, "in humble faith, and with a heart which longs for truth and goodness, opens his mouth and draws in his breath, that man is straightway filled, — not with some vague influence only, but with all the fullness of God. The desire and the power to do right which he acquires is none other than the central force which animates the world. He lives and moves in God."

In the relation of the physical sky to the earth we found one fact which furnishes, I fear, a striking analogy to some things which are happening in the spiritual world. We saw that the sky follows men

down into cellars and mines and caverns, only that it leaves behind its torch of life-giving light; that it carries into those fastnesses the vital air by which men live; but that this air is liable there to be mixed with poisonous vapors, so that it will no longer sustain life.

Something like this is true of the relation of the spiritual world to the present age in which we live. So long as a man keeps above the world, — on top of the world, keeps it under his feet, — the heavenly influences in all their power are round about him, and his life will be filled with strength and beauty; but when he burrows in the earth he leaves the light of heaven behind him. The man who suffers himself to be immersed in material interests and cares thus puts himself beyond the range of the purest and most inspiring spiritual influences. The dwellers in caverns lose their sense of the sky, their joy in the light; the fish in the mammoth cave are blind; men would gradually lose their eyesight if they tarried in that darkness. It is not less true that those who immure themselves in the underground world of material goods and gains are likely to forget that there is a sky and to cease to have any vision for its glories. And it often happens, I fear, that the life of the spirit is stifled in the poisonous damps of that nether world.

We are children of the light, not of the darkness; and if we would keep our souls alive we must not

suffer ourselves to be buried in the world; we must live above the world, where the light of God can shine upon us, and where all the genial influences of heaven can find entrance to our lives.

Just as sure as the sky is round about us, as eternity is our habitation, as heaven is a present reality more than a future hope, so sure is it that He whose days are from everlasting to everlasting, and whose love is the light and the law of heaven, must be the one ever-present, inclusive, all pervading fact of the life of every man.

"O Life that breathest in all sweet things
That bud and bloom upon the earth,
That fillest the sky with songs and wings,
That walkest the world through human birth, —

"O Life that lightest in every man
A spark of thine own being's flame,
And wilt that spark to glory fan, —
Our listening souls would bear thy Name.

"Thy voice is sweet in brook and bird
And boughs that over our home-roofs bend;
And dear is every kindly word
Borne from the lip of friend to friend.

"Thou livest, most human, most divine!
To no veiled Fate or Force we bow:
Far off, God's blinding splendors shine;
His near deep tenderness art Thou."

Such is the life which is normal to the children of men; and if, in our experience, there is no con-

sciousness of such a relation to things unseen and eternal, there must be great faculties in us lying dormant that ought to be roused, and windows in our lives long closed which cannot too soon be opened.

II

THE FULFILLMENT OF LIFE

It is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure. — PHIL. ii. 13.

"CANST thou by searching find out God?" demands Zophar the Naamathite of the doubting Job. "Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Zophar seems to have been something of an agnostic, as respects the first question of theology, yet, like many agnostics, he was dogmatic enough in enforcing his own notions of God upon his suffering friend. His questions are, however, pertinent for the students of every generation. It is well for us to understand that God cannot be comprehended in any definitions which we can frame, and that the limiting conceptions of Him which we are wont to form, leave out infinitely more than they include. If agnosticism signifies that we do not profess to know all about the Eternal One we may all wisely confess ourselves agnostics; if it signifies that we can know nothing about Him, it is a libel on our faculties and

an insult to our deepest intelligence. We do not know all about this universe. The whole that the wisest man knows about it is but a fragment compared with what he does not know. Nevertheless we do know something about it. We know, by evidence which is irresistible, that it *is* a universe; we know much about its processes and forces; we know how our own lives are affected by some of them. Science is the rational interpretation of the universe. It is but a partial and fragmentary interpretation, and there is no prospect of the coming of a time when it will be a complete interpretation; but science does know something about the universe, something well worth knowing, something significant and inspiring. May we not say the same thing about the Source and Author of the universe? We cannot by searching find Him out; we cannot explore all the secrets of his being, but we do know parts of his ways, and, in truth, of all our knowledge, He is the central Element, the informing and ruling Principle. If the universe is rational, if we can understand and interpret its laws, it is because it is an expression or revelation of the Eternal Reason, which is another name for God. In truth, therefore, all our science is but a tracing of the presence of God in the universe. If we read the play of "Macbeth" and understand it, it is because our minds follow the mind of Shakespeare from sentence to sentence and from scene to scene. If we hear the "Sonata

Appassionata," and enjoy it, it is because our minds follow the mind of Beethoven from phrase to phrase and from movement to movement. If we study the Book of Nature and understand it, it is because our minds follow the mind of the Author from organism to organism and from system to system. If Reason, the Eternal Logos, were not expressed in nature, our reason could not interpret nature. All scientific study proceeds, therefore, upon the assumption of the presence in nature of thought relations, and thought without a thinker is inconceivable. The very substratum of science is Reason in nature, and if Reason in nature does not spell God, words have no meaning.

The trouble, then, with those who by searching do not find God is that they go too far afield in their search. They are straining their eyes to something beyond the stars when the Reality that they are seeking is "closer than breathing." They are like those birds that fly from mountain-top to mountain-top in search of air, or fishes that swim from one shore of the ocean to the other in search of water. For there is not a substance that we can touch, not a force whose operation we can see or feel, not a vibration of the air, not a pulsation of the light that does not reveal to us God. The physicists used to challenge us with that intractable word, matter. That, they seemed to assume, was something lifeless and inert. No sign of the presence of God

could be discerned in matter, they assumed. For it was proved that all these physical substances could be broken up by heat or electricity, that everything could be resolved into minute particles called atoms. The atom, it was supposed, was the ultimate physical fact. Nobody ever saw one, of course, but there were reasons for believing in their existence. Lord Kelvin has shown by different lines of argument that an atom cannot be more than one one hundred and fifty millionth of an inch in diameter. It takes considerable scientific imagination to picture a body of such dimensions, but the physicists were formerly wont to assume that it had "a definite weight, magnitude, and form." Some supposed that these minute bodies were crystalline, others that they were spherical. But it was deemed certain that they were bits of resisting substance, and the theory of those who were called materialists was that these atoms are eternal and uncreated, and that by their fortuitous concourse all natural forms have been produced. The existence of these infinitesimal particles of non-living matter seemed to some thinkers to contradict the idea of the spiritual origin of the universe. "Here," they said, "is the ultimate scientific fact, the atom. You cannot go behind that. It is not alive, and it does not reveal any of the attributes of mind. Matter and not spirit is the primary fact in this universe." But that kind of argument has lost its force. The recent investiga-

tions into the nature of these atoms show that they are not minute physical bodies at all; that they are probably centres of motion. Thus at a recent meeting of the British Association, the president of the physical section entered into an elaborate examination of the latest speculations on the relations of matter, electricity, and ether, in which the old theory of the ultimate hard particle wholly disappears from sight. The prevailing view now is, he tells us, that what is known as the atom of matter is "of the nature of a structure in the æther, involving an atmosphere of ætherial strain all round it — not a small body which exerts direct action at a distance on other atoms according to extraneous laws of force." And the ether, in which these vortices appear, is not "matter" in the sense usually allotted to that word. It is rather, as one explains, "the homogeneous and undifferentiated medium out of which matter emerges. True, we do not know what it is. But it has the power, at any rate, to dissolve away the incubus of the solid atom, and to give the enthralling suggestion of one ultimate substance which is neither matter nor mind, but the source of both." Is not that an "enthralling suggestion?" Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, O man of science, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground! I AM THAT I AM is speaking unto thee.

This does not look as if what men call matter were

the ultimate fact of the universe. It looks as if the ultimate fact which science finds to-day is something that better deserves the name of spirit. "We have, indeed," says the writer I was just quoting, "passed right through the cloud of materialism. We have come out on the other side into the eternal light." All the recent developments of physical theory take us up to the very boundaries of the realm of spirit. With the idea of a spiritual origin of the universe the latest science can be far more easily reconciled than with the idea of its origin in lifeless matter.

But if we find in the inorganic realm such reasons for reverential thought, how much stronger are our reasons when we begin to deal with the facts of life. If the Energy which is moving in the heart of the atom claims our reverence, how much more does that which appeals to us in the cell and in the organism! Non-living substances startle us by the revelations which they make to us of an unseen Power, but wherever we find life we find deeper reasons still for awe and wonder and worship.

In all life the fundamental fact is the tendency to perfection. Every living thing is endowed with forces which are pressing it on toward the completion of its life, toward wholeness or health, toward symmetry and beauty, toward maturity and fruitfulness. Matthew Arnold's well-known phrase describes the fact — "*the stream of tendency by which*

all things fulfill the law of their being." It is true not only of the days of June, it is true of every month in the year and every hour in the day, that everything is upward striving, — reaching out after the fulfillment of its being. If it suffer wounding or lesion, something is there which goes to work at once to repair the injury. The whole drift and movement of the central force of the organism is toward health, toward life, toward perfection of being. This is a fact on which we count in all our own husbandry, in all our handling of the lives of plants and animals. It is a tendency with which we are so familiar that we seldom think of its significance. For it has tremendous significance. It is a proof which no gainsaying can weaken, that not Reason merely, but Goodness also, is at the heart of nature. The optimism of the race — for the race as a whole is always optimistic — rests upon this fundamental fact. And Matthew Arnold tells us that the best name for this fact is God. "That all things," he says, "seem to us to have what we call a law of their being, and to tend to fulfill it, is certain and admitted; though whether we will call this God or not is a matter of choice. Suppose, however, we call it God; we then give the name of God to a certain and admitted reality; this, at least, is an advantage; but the notion of our definition does, in fact, enter into the term God, in men's common use of it. To please God, to serve God, to obey God's will, means to follow a

law of things which is found in conscience, and which is an indication, irrespective of our arbitrary wish and fancy, of what we ought to do. There is, then, a real power not ourselves which makes for righteousness, and it is the greatest of realities for us.

"When St. Paul says that our business is 'to serve the spirit of God,' 'to serve the living and true God,' and when Epictetus says, 'What do I want? — to acquaint myself with the true order of things and to comply with it,' they both mean, so far, the same, in that they both mean we should obey a tendency, which is not ourselves, but which appears in our consciousness, by which things fulfill the real law of their being."

This tendency appears not only in our consciousness, it appears in all the healthy movements and functions of our bodies. Nay, it is even true that what we call disease is often the same tendency wrestling with organic or functional obstructions and trying to throw them off. And this stream of tendency by which we are borne onward — our bodies and our souls — toward health and perfection and fullness of life, — what is it, if it is not God, working in us, to will and to work, of his good pleasure? We have the power to resist this tendency or to counteract it in any part of our nature; we have power to fight against God. We may check or turn aside or vitiate by perverse or ignorant conduct

the tendencies to health, and bring upon ourselves feebleness and decay; we may resist the Holy Ghost gently leading us toward sanity and virtue and serenity of soul, and fill our minds with darkness and selfishness and envy and jealousy and malice and despair; possibly we may be able to stifle this divine voice and to paralyze this gracious influence; I do not dogmatize about that; I will only say that it is certainly within our power greatly to lessen within our own souls the volume and force of that stream of tendency by which we are borne toward the fulfillment of life. But I hope and believe that I am not speaking to-day to any one in whom God is not working now, with the resources of infinite power, to give health and life and peace.

"It is God which worketh [is working] in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." To whom does Paul speak these words, — to saints who have entered into perfection of character? Nay, but to very weak and imperfect disciples — to those who are working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. It is such as these whom he assures that God is working in them. This truth is not for elect and holy souls; it is for the sinner and the outcast also. It is for every living soul. Wherever there is life, there is that stream of tendency by which all things fulfill the law of their being: there is God. Of the physical nature we shall all admit the truth of this: the immanent God is in our bodies, work-

ing toward health and soundness and growth and perfection all the while; the most orthodox of us does not doubt that. Is he not, then, in the soul, as well as in the body, working there toward virtue and goodness? Has the divine operation ceased in the souls of those who are known as the unregenerate? Is there a class of people in this world in whose bodies there is a stream of tendency by which they fulfill the law of their being, but in whose souls there is no such tendency? There is theology, and a good deal of it, which wants us to believe some such thing as this, but I, for one, must decline to do it. For I cannot imagine that God cares less for the soul of man than for his body, or works less faithfully to keep it sound and whole. I am sure that Paul must be speaking, not of saints, but of all God's children, and not of their physical natures, but of their spiritual natures also, when he bears witness, "God is working in you."

Good friends, will you not stop and think what this means? We are here in the house which we call the house of God; we have come hither to worship Him, to learn what we can about Him, to put ourselves into the proper relations with Him. Is this a fruitless effort, or a mere matter of form? Are we dealing here with any reality? Or are we saying with Job,—

> "Oh that I knew where I might find him,
> That I might come even to his seat!

I would order my cause before him,
And fill my mouth with arguments.
. . . . . .
Behold, I go forward, but he is not there;
And backward, but I cannot perceive him:
On the left hand, where he doth work, but
I cannot behold him:
He hideth himself on the right hand, that
I cannot see him."

How melancholy it is that such gulfs of darkness and doubt should separate our thought from Him whose life is thrilling at every moment in our veins! For if there be a God, nothing can be so near to us as He is. In every pulsation of the vital tissues, in every throb of the pulses He is present, nor can He be absent from any movement of our conscious life.

"There is no separation," says one, "between our souls and that spirit in whom, in the most literal sense, we live and move and have our being, between the world in which we live and that eternal reality of whose substance and of whose activity it is a part.

"All nature reveals God . . . He is in nature, yet more than nature; personal, yet more than person; on the one hand the great unity, omnipresent force, and substance whence all things and beings proceed, impersonal, infinite, unknown, transcendent, indefinable; on the other hand relatively known, finite, immanent, personal; an intelligent power, large

enough to be the author of all life and near enough so that Jesus could name him Father, and so that we can perceive his activity in our daily lives; near to us in this present happy moment as in the countless æons of eternity of which this fleeting moment is an integrant part."

What a conception it is that our lives are pervaded, flooded with streams of divine influence steadily bearing us toward health and peace and blessedness! Why is it that we are not aware of them? Is it because we have so long resisted or ignored them? A deeper reason may be that we have not been trained to recognize them; our thoughts have been turned away from the revelation of God in our own lives to some conception of a distant deity dwelling apart amid the clouds of heaven. We have not learned the truth that the place to find Him is within our own consciousness, in the ongoings of our own life and thought. The divine significance of our own lives we have not known. Is it not time that we had begun to be aware of it? If what Paul tells us in the text is true, it is the sublimest truth which the human mind can conceive. What is there for us to do but to place ourselves under the power of these divine influences and let them will and work for God's good pleasure? The power within us is making for health and perfection of physical life. Let us accept that fact and rejoice in it. God means that we shall be well and strong. That is the direction

in which all the deepest movements of our lives are tending. Let us not ignore that fact; let us hail it with thanksgiving. Let us understand that health is our birthright. The infinite love is working in us to give us health and strength. That is his will concerning us. Let us join our wills with his. Let us choose for ourselves what he has chosen for us.

The power that worketh in us is making for righteousness, as well as for health; for soundness of heart and mind and character, as well as for soundness of body. God means that we shall be upright and pure and true. There is a constant stream of spiritual tendency, flowing through our souls, by which, if we will but suffer it to have free course within us, we shall be delivered from the thraldom of sense and selfishness into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Do you not know that this power is working in you? Look into your own hearts, I pray you, and find it there! Gently, silently, lovingly, the spirit of all truth and grace is moving in your thought, telling you of better things that are possible to you, pointing you to the ways of life, showing you the kind of man you ought to be, pressing steadily upon your choices to constrain you to lay hold on the highest things. What are all these thoughts, wishes, aspirations, but God that worketh in you, to will and to work, of his good pleasure? Behind every pure desire, every upward striving of

your soul, is the power of the infinite God. Why not let Him have his way? Why not get acquainted with this Power that is working in you, and find out what He is doing, and fling your own soul with all its energies into the stream of tendency which is bearing you onward to perfection of life?

Is this any novelty or heresy of doctrine? Oh, no! It is as old as the Bible. It is the doctrine of Paul and John and James; it is the fullness of life which Jesus promised to all his disciples. It is our meagre, narrow, formal theologic conception of God's grace which has hidden from us the glorious truth. I think, too, that our mechanical philosophy of nature and creation has stood in the way of our receiving it. It is the evolutionary philosophy, as I profoundly believe, which has made it possible for us to realize this truth about God. For this philosophy helps us to see that God is always in his world, in every part of it; it makes creation a continuous process; it enables us to understand that all things come into existence through Him, and that apart from Him nothing exists. The habit of thinking which evolution has led in — if evolution is t[illegible]istically interpreted — makes it far easier for us [illegible]n it was for those who have gone before us, to recognize the presence of God in our lives. And I am sure that all our thinking, if it is deep and thorough, must be conducting us to the recognition of this great truth.

It ought to result in a revolution in the religious life of most of us. It ought to make religion a matter not of theory, but of the most positive personal knowledge. If God is working in us, after this manner, we may know it, and we ought to be co-workers with Him. If every man's soul is a temple of the living God, the altar of the heart must not be neglected or defiled. If the stream of divine tendency is flowing through our lives, it is only by our own indifference or resistance that we fail to reach perfection and blessedness. If the indwelling God is putting forth the energies of omnipotence to give us all the good which our souls are capable of receiving, and we are aware of the fact, then it is our own fault if we are not well and happy and strong. For worry or fear or doubt there can be no room in our experience. Immunity from outward evil and suffering we are not promised, but power is ours by which all these ills may be transformed into blessings; by which we may find security and peace even in the whirlwind and the tempest. For who is our God? He is one who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us.* And that sublime prayer of Paul for his Ephesian brethren may gather some new significance in the light of the truth that we have been studying:

"I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named,

that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

III

MOMENTS AND MOVEMENTS

And there was evening and there was morning, one day. — Gen. i. 5.

The fact to be noted here is that the day includes evening and morning, darkness and light, high noon and midnight, twilight that broadens into dawn, twilight that deepens into dark. All these phases of light and shadow, of sunny warmth and nightly chill, must be taken together when we make up our account of the day. You cannot analyze the day into instants and judge it by any given instant. There is no moment of the day that can be taken as typical of the whole. The day includes fourteen hundred and forty minutes; but if you take any one of these minutes, no matter which one, with all the contents of that minute, all that it brings to your consciousness, and multiply it by fourteen hundred and forty, the product will not be one day, but something wholly different — something that never existed upon this planet.

This leads to the consideration of a grave fault of much of our modern reasoning. Its method is quite too exclusively analytical. It expects to find

out the truth of things by pulling them to bits and studying each bit by itself. Much truth about some things may be found out in this way, — the truth about rocks and minerals of all sorts, perhaps; but there are very many things which cannot be studied in bits; they must be studied and comprehended as wholes, or they cannot be comprehended at all. Nay, you do not even understand the bits, until you see them all together.

My thought was directed toward this theme while looking at an instantaneous photograph of an athlete in the air, vaulting the parallel bar. The picture struck me as essentially untrue. I had seen the movement often; I had not seen anything like this. Then I began to study instantaneous photographs of men and animals in motion, and the more I studied them, and the more I compared them with the reality, the more unnatural they seemed to me. Those photographs of trotting and running horses — how unlike they are to all that we have seen upon the track or the turf, — how stiff and angular and apparently impossible! Yet we have been inclined to say that these, of course, must be true pictures; that the photograph cannot lie; that here was clear evidence of the imperfection of art, of the inability of artists to see things as they are and accurately to represent them; and that the painters must study these photographs and imitate them if they wished to give us true pictures of living crea-

tures in motion. Certain pictures which I have lately seen, by eminent illustrators, indicate that they have taken this view of the case, and have been learning of the photographs instead of trusting their eyes. I am quite sure that this suggestion is altogether misleading. A photograph of a living creature in motion is not and cannot be a true picture of a living creature in motion. For why? "Motion," says Professor Tait, "consists simply in change of position." Now what the instantaneous photograph gives you is simply position, not change of position. Out of an infinite series of positions each unlike all the rest, it snatches one and gives you that to look at. Of course there is and must be some lack of absolute definiteness in the outline of this picture; but the indefiniteness is so slight that your eye cannot detect it. The picture is so nearly instantaneous that your senses do not observe the blur. What the photograph gives you is, then, an instant of rest. And a picture of rest, which is all that the photograph can give, is a very different thing from a picture of motion, which is what it assumes to give. In order that you may truly see this living creature in motion, you must see it not only during this instant, but during the instants which precede and follow this — you must see not merely one position, but *the series of positions*, of which there are not two alike. This is why the instantaneous photograph, as a picture of motion, is essentially untrue.

The instantaneous photograph may give us a valuable report as to the groupings of moving individuals; as to their motions it can tell us nothing that will not be misleading. The artists who trust their eyes, and paint for us moving creatures *as they look to them*, will give us a better idea of their movement than we can possibly get from a photograph. For what the instantaneous photograph does is to analyze a movement into moments of rest and give us a moment of rest, while the artist gives us something like what he sees; he gives us a kind of artistic synthesis of several consecutive moments, which is much truer, as a picture of motion, than the photograph can possibly be.

Let us take the simpler case of a curved line, the arc of a circle, for example. That curve may be analyzed into points. From one of these points, if you could see it, whether with the bodily eye or with the mind's eye, could you get any idea of the curve? No; and you may multiply these points indefinitely, and they will tell you nothing whatever about the curve. You must know the position of other points in the curve — of a series of these points; you must see what is their relation to each other; in other words, you must know the law of the curve, the length of the radius, the nature of the power that strings these points together and generates the curve, before you can get any idea of the curve. Imagine a mathematician analyzing a curve into mathemat-

ical points, and then attempting, by the study of these points, by comparing them, and classifying them, and reasoning about them, to formulate the law of the curve. But we have a good deal of what is called scientific reasoning which is quite similar to this.

Take the case of a melody, which is a succession of sweet sounds differing from each other in pitch or in length, but related to each other by some unwritten law. That melody can be accurately analyzed into single tones; will any one of these tones, sung or played by itself, give you any idea of the melody? No; you may shorten or prolong this tone, you may sing it *fortissimo*, or *pianissimo*, you may repeat it a hundred thousand times, and you will know no more about the melody than you knew when you began. Nay, more. You may take all the notes of this melody, and make a table of them, classifying them as to pitch and length; and put the classified table into the hands of the most learned musician in the world, and he will not be able to construct the melody, unless he knew it before. You must know not only what are these individual tones, but you must know their relation to one another, you must know the succession in which they stand, in order to comprehend the melody. The spirit that made them into a melody analysis cannot give you.

Thus it is evident that, even before we reach the kingdoms of life, among the phenomena of motion,

and the phenomena of art, and in the representation to the eye or the thought of geometric principles, this work of analysis may easily be carried too far. It is quite plain that there are some things that are not explained by pulling them to bits, that cannot be understood at all when they are reduced to fragments, but must always be taken in their wholeness, whenever we deal with them or think about them.

When we rise into the kingdoms of life, the foolishness of a merely analytical method becomes even more apparent. Take the acorn or the apple seed and put it into your retort. You can analyze it into its elements; but long before you have reached the sum of them, all that made it an acorn or an apple seed has ceased to exist. The chemical analysis of any living thing destroys life, but makes no report whatever concerning the nature of the life which it has destroyed. You have, as the result of your analysis, certain chemical elements which can be named and weighed; but you have not the faintest trace of that mysterious coördinating power which had marshaled these elements into an organism, and which we call life. It is quite plain that we may study these elements till doomsday and never gain a particle of knowledge concerning acorns or apple seeds.

And even though we stop short of chemical analysis and content ourselves with anatomy, we shall

not, by that means, gain any complete knowledge of the living thing which we are trying to study. Anatomy may enable us to take the organism to pieces and study each organ by itself. That is often a very useful process. Great have been the gains of such anatomical investigation. Let me not seem to disparage them. The conquests which have been won for biological science by this means are magnificent. But, after all, there is much that we need to know about any organism which we do not learn by taking it apart, — which we can only learn by keeping it together. We do not understand any one of these parts until we see it in its place, and comprehend its relations to all the other parts. You cannot understand the heart until you understand its connections with the arteries, the veins, the lungs, the nervous system, the digestive system; until you know how it is affected by the other parts of the body, and how the other parts of the body are affected by it. And this holds true of pathology as well as of anatomy; for no one can be a thoroughly good oculist or a thoroughly good dentist without a good knowledge of general physiology. The man who studies only the eye or the teeth will not understand the eye or the teeth. The scientist may think that he can afford to be a narrow specialist, and confine all his study to a single organ, but the practitioner cannot be; he must know the working of the whole mechanism, in order that he may know

how to treat that particular part of it with which he is trying to deal.

And as you cannot comprehend a life by analyzing it into atoms, or by dissecting it into its constituent organs and studying these separately, so you cannot comprehend a life by even the fullest knowledge of it at any single epoch or period. If you could perfectly describe the acorn, that would not be a description of the oak. If you could tell all about the tree as it appears to-day, that would be a very imperfect account of the tree. You must take in all the stages of its growth, from its germination to its final decay, if you wish to give a true account of it. An existence which extends through weeks or years or centuries, and which is constantly changing, is not adequately accounted for when you merely report its *present* condition.

I had written as far as this, when I laid down my pen and took up a book near my hand, wherein I came upon this paragraph:

"The supposition that . . . the way of abstraction will lead to the highest truth is one of the most pernicious errors in philosophy. Abstraction or analysis is an element in scientific method, but taken by itself it will produce nothing but a mere external arrangement of things by genera and species, — what is called in logic a 'tree of porphyry,' — the tree that of all others best realizes the nursery rhyme, — 'This is the tree that never grew.' Only

in so far as the comparison of many facts enables us to detect in them a principle of unity which dominates all this difference and explains it, can abstraction lead to any valuable result. The abstracting or *analytic* process, by which unity is separated from difference, is nothing without the *synthetic* process by which unity is discerned *in* difference, as the principle which at once originates and overcomes it." [1]

This is certainly an apt philosophical statement of the principle which I am trying to illustrate. Let me go on to point out, very briefly, certain applications of this principle.

1. People often err in their judgments of the course of history, because they see only the present moment, and have no knowledge of the times which have preceded and no power of foreseeing the times to come. The man who stands on the threshold of his own generation and takes his snapshot at the scene before him, gets a view as distorted and unnatural as that of the athlete caught in the air. He does not discern the movement; he only sees the moment. One really needs to know a great deal about what has been going on in the world for several thousands of years, in order that he may be able to express any rational opinion about present tendencies. He cannot understand the facts which he sees, he cannot comprehend the times in which

[1] *The Evolution of Religion*, by Edward Caird: vol. i. p. 149.

he lives, unless he has considerable knowledge of the path which civilization has been traveling up to this hour.

Some wide and careful reading of history is therefore a necessary condition of sound judgment upon present affairs. To many a despondent saint it would be a great means of grace. For pessimism it is a sovereign cure. I have never known a competent historical scholar who was at all disposed to pessimism. And as a knowledge of the movements of history would correct our judgments of the present moment, so would it also convince us of the foolishness of many of the remedies which we seek to apply to existing evils.

2. Some of the so-called sciences which attempt to deal with the facts of human nature have fallen into error in this way, by taking human nature to pieces, and trying to found a science upon a single isolated principle or motive. This was the trouble with the old political economy. It abstracted from humanity one motive — that of self-interest — and based its reasonings about human conduct upon that. The economic man with whom alone it was concerned, was a man who was governed by self-interest only; to whom competition was the only law. The fact is, that there are no such men. The science which is based on a fragment of human nature is sure to be a false science; for all these human motives are so interblended, so constantly affected by

one another, that you cannot understand any one of them, unless you take it in its relations to all the rest. The heart is an important organ of the human body, but a specialist who studied the heart only, and refused to take into consideration its relations to the other organs, and their influence upon it, could not have any adequate knowledge of the heart. And no man can understand industrial and economic questions at all who follows the method of the old economists, abstracting the principle of self-interest from the human nature, and basing his science upon deductions drawn from that principle. Fortunately, that method of dealing with industrial and economic questions is now among scientific men well known to be inadequate.

3. Theology has often proceeded much after this fashion in making up its account of the teachings of the Bible. It has shredded the Bible into bits, and has then taken these bits and pieced them together to make up theories of its own. The proof-text method of confirming theological propositions is an aggravated example of the kind of reasoning of which I have been speaking. Analysis was never more industriously or more mischievously used than it has been by this method. You can prove anything you please in this way. Any doctrine, no matter how absurd, no matter how immoral, can be abundantly established by searching the Bible and taking a verse here, and a sentence there, as proof-

texts. These texts are thus, very often, made to yield an utterly false meaning. Taken out of their connection, you do not understand them at all.

4. Indeed, you cannot understand the Bible at all, unless you take it as a whole, unless you remember that it is the record of a long development of religious ideas and institutions, unless you judge it by its completed utterance in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. If you do not see it whole, you do not see it at all. If you take any single period, any single phase of that development, and try to judge it apart from the rest, you do not understand it. You might as well attempt to judge of an apple by tasting or analyzing the half-grown, unripe fruit which hangs on our trees in June, as to criticise Biblical teaching by examining the separate details of the Mosaic legislation. It would be well if such critics would remember the Aristotelian maxim, that the nature of a thing is to be discovered, not in its origin, but in its end; you must see the process through before you make up your mind about it. The man who forms his judgment of what the word day means by observing and reporting all the phenomena which appear about four o'clock on a December morning, will not have a very just opinion of the true meaning of that word. And the fact that the Bible is the true chronicle of a stupendous moral development, and that it gives us all stages of that development, from semibarbarism up to a

high spiritual morality, with the customs, usages, laws which were expedient at each of these stages, is a fact which must never be lost sight of in judging the Bible.

5. I have already spoken of the error of attempting to found a science upon an abstracted and isolated principle of human nature. There is another and greater error, made by those who base upon anatomy or analysis their whole doctrine of man. If you cannot understand any single interest of man by separating it from all his other interests, much less can you discover and explain the complete man by going to work upon him with the scalpel and the retort. The impossibility of finding even physical life by such methods has been already emphasized. Much less can you by any sort of anatomy or analysis get at the facts of mind.

I have found no more impressive testimony on this point than that of one of the most distinguished and brilliant naturalists, Professor Shaler of Harvard University, who testifies that his earlier scientific studies led him away from Christianity, while his later reflections have brought him back toward the ground from which he had departed. And the reason of this departure, as he clearly sees, was the exaggeration of analysis. "Beginning," he says, "with the simpler and apparently mechanical facts with which they have to deal, inquirers into phenomena are, at first, almost necessarily led to

conceive nature as a great engine, which can be explained as we account for a combination of wheels and levers. Gradually, as they are forced to more extended views of their subject-matter, they perceive that this simple explanation is unsatisfactory." [1]

Most notable to this investigator is the failure of naturalistic science to deal with one whole hemisphere of phenomena. "The organic world," he says, "has two distinct realms: the one includes the vast assemblage of specific forms, — visible, tangible bodies, explaining themselves to the senses, and affording an infinite field for the employment of all the observer's skill of eye and hand; the other realm is that of mental parts. Here the field of observation is as shadowy and perplexed as it is evident and clear in the physical realm. . . . The whole training of the naturalist, as it is now pursued, tends to blind him to the observation of such obscure things as the mental phenomena of nature. . . . There are few naturalists, and those mainly of the class that did not enter on the study of zoölogy by the anatomical path, who have shown any skill in the study of the mental parts of animals." [2]

Could there be a stronger testimony to the fact that the analytic and mechanical methods of dealing with natural history have a tendency to obscure and suppress one whole realm of the organic world? Even the animals that the biologist studies he often

[1] *The Interpretation of Nature*, p. v. [2] Ibid. pp. 238–241.

does not understand, and the main reason is that his method is wholly anatomical: he tries to find out what these living creatures are by dissecting them and studying them under the microscope; and he is often disposed to think that it is only that which he can see and weigh and chemically test that has real existence. If, as Professor Shaler says, this method is so utterly inadequate when it is applied to the lower animals, what must it be when it is applied to men? How completely must it miss the cardinal facts of humanity.

That the method of "victorious analysis" does conduct to just such results as are here suggested is a melancholy fact. A large show of the agnosticism of the present day is due to this cause. It is necessary that the viciousness of the method should be distinctly pointed out. The people who are analyzing movements into moments can neither see nor tell the truth about the movement; the people who are taking melodies to pieces and making classified lists of their notes cannot show us in their tables the soul of the melody; the anatomists and the histologists who are shredding life into fragments are helpless when they undertake to speak in any adequate way of the life which they have destroyed. There are some things which must be seen whole or they are not seen at all. The subtlest and the mightiest forces, even of the natural world, can be found beneath the microscope or weighed in the chemist's

balances no more than the winds of summer can be caught in a net, no more than the spirit of the springtime can be penned into some farmer's well-fenced field.

The age in which we live has been quite too much addicted to pulling things to bits. It analyzes life and kills it; it individualizes humanity till the social bond is shattered; it turns a man into an aggregation of molecules and loses his soul in the operation. It is time that we were coming back in all our thinking, in all our study of nature and of man and of society, to that wider outlook, that larger synthesis, which recognizes the mighty but invisible forces and laws by which all these fragments are knit together in unity. Let us recall and hold fast that wise word of our philosopher, already quoted, that "the analytic process by which unity is separated from difference is nothing without the synthetic process by which unity is discerned in difference." When the thought of the age returns upon that track, as it seems to be returning; when the unity which is discerned in difference begins to engage the attention of the world, the path will be found which will lead the men who study nature straight into the presence of

> "That God who ever lives and loves, —
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off, divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

IV

THE PERMANENT AND THE TRANSIENT

For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. — ISAIAH xxx. 15.

And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was and which is and which is to come. — REV. iv. 8.

HERE seem to be two contrasted, if not contradictory conceptions of the supreme good of life. The word of the prophet puts the emphasis upon a passive acceptance of the divine bounty. It is not in activity, but in receptivity, that the people of God are to find satisfaction. It is not by any energetic endeavors of their own, not by hasty flight or strenuous pursuing, but by sitting still and waiting, that they shall see the salvation of God.

The word of the Revelator, on the other hand, gives us a glimpse of the blessedness of the life to come; and this, as he discerns it, does not consist in quiescence, but in tireless action. The four living creatures, whose forms appear in this vision,

represent to us some type of creaturely intelligence, in fullest harmony with the creative Power; and they are figured as most fully equipped for movement — each of them has six wings; as intensely wakeful and vigilant — they are full of eyes round about and within; and "they have no rest, day and night" — their praise, their service, before the throne and round about the throne, is ceaseless and untiring.

These contrasted conceptions of the highest good of life are common in the Bible. We are often bidden to stand still, and we are as often bidden to run. The stationary state is sometimes exalted, and quite as often the transitional state. At one time the condition of happiness is represented as a permanency of relation — fixity, steadfastness; at another time we are admonished to remember that life is a pilgrimage, that we have here no continuing city, that we must

> "Nightly pitch our moving tent
> A day's march nearer home."

Sometimes we are told that the life of the righteous is like that of the tree planted by the rivers of water — the growth whose environment is fixed, whose home never changes; and sometimes we are likened to the bird that makes every bough of the forest its perch, and every clime its temporary resting-place.

Which now of these contrary counsels are we to adopt? Shall we find our good in sitting and waiting for what comes to hand, or in going forth in quest of the blessedness that will not come? Shall we stand still and see the salvation of God, or shall we run the race that is set before us, with energy and perseverance, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Shall we take root, or shall we take wings? Shall we rest and receive, or shall we work and win? Shall we hold fast what we have, or shall we regard our gains of knowledge and character as temporary and provisional, and always be ready to let them all go in exchange for something better?

It is evident that we have here what the philosophers call an antinomy: two sets of laws or maxims which stand over against each other in apparently irreconcilable conflict, in an antithesis which logic fails to reduce. And it becomes equally evident, as soon as we begin to observe the attitudes and the utterances of the people round about us, that a great many of them are much inclined to take one set or the other of these rules of life, and follow it, ignoring or denying the other. This seems to be the only view which some minds can take of these metaphysical and moral antinomies. To admit that such a question has two sides is beyond their capacity; it seems to them a kind of infidelity to recognize any such thing. The shield must be either black

or white; the man who says that it is both black and white must be playing fast and loose with his convictions.

It is amusing, and it is also pitiful to observe the mental operations of these people who have got hold of a half truth, and are waging warfare not only upon those who hold the other half, but upon those as well who hold both halves. The sun is the source of light and heat; a sect may yet arise which shall maintain that it is the source of light only and not of heat at all; and another sect which shall insist that it is the source of heat and not of light. And the partisans of light, if they find in any man's published words any reference to the fact that the sun is a source of light, will be sure to claim him as secretly belonging to their sect. "See," they will cry, "this man admits the truth. He knows that our side is right. If he dared, he would identify himself with us. He is a truckler and a coward; his own words bear witness against him." And precisely thus the partisans of heat will be certain to quote from the works of astronomers and physicists every reference to the heat of the sun's rays, as proving their position and refuting and exploding the theories of their antagonists. This may seem an improbable supposition; but there are persons who suppose themselves to be intelligent, and who are conducting discussions about plain matters on precisely this method to-day. They have got possession

of a half truth; they are waging war on those who hold the other half, and they are gathering from all literature and science precisely those statements which make for their partial view, while they shut their eyes in the most determined fashion against the complementary statements. How many human beings there are in this world of ours to whom one often wishes to say: "Good friends, what you affirm is true, — no doubt of it; but the trouble with you is that what you deny is also true, and you need both truths; if your heads were a little wider between the eyes, you could take them both in, and then you would cease to be fanatics and would become reasonable beings." The defect may be due to natural limitation, or to bad education. When it is congenital, we must try to be patient with it, as we are with other infirmities of mankind. So far, however, as it arises from bad education, we must do what we can to overcome it; and therefore it is well to keep steadily before our eyes those contrasted statements in which the Scriptures so largely deal.

I desire to bring before you at this time one of these couplets, only one; and to ask you to consider with me the mutual relations of the permanent and the transient as factors of our spiritual experience. Between that which is stable and that which is in constant flux — that which is fixed and that which is fleeting — our life moves on. There is a tendency

to permanence; it is a healthy tendency, a normal tendency, no sound character is without it; on the other hand, there is a tendency to change, and that tendency is equally healthy, equally normal; the character which does not freely submit to it is unlovely and unfruitful.

There are two types of philosophy which represent these two contrasted tendencies of nature, — the deistical philosophy of the last century, which conceives of nature as an ordained and changeless mechanical process, and the materialistic evolutionism of the present day, which conceives of nature as having no point of departure and no certain goal. The deistic cosmogony, as Dr. Martineau explains it, represents that in setting up the cosmos, "the Creator willed its order into being once for all; depositing in its materials the properties which would execute his purposes spontaneously, without need of his returning to it again. In other words, it is a vast magazine of 'Second Causes' which enable it to go of itself, and which would do their duty though he were asleep." There is motion here in the world, according to this theory, but there is really no change; the machinery is always running, but it is always making the same things; the order is stereotyped; progress is inconceivable. Materialistic evolutionism, on the other hand, follows the conception of Heraclitus, of an eternal flux; the universe is a stream of tendencies; nobody knows when or where

it rose; probably it never rose at all; probably it has been always flowing; nobody knows whither it is going; all we know is that it is moving by and we are in it; for a little while our heads are above the surface, pretty soon they will sink out of sight; but the stream keeps flowing. "Heraclitus," says Ueberweg, "assumes as the substantial principle of things, ethereal fire, which he at once identifies with the divine spirit who knows and directs all things. The process of things is twofold, involving the transformation of all things into fire and then of fire into all other things. The former movement is styled the way downward which leads from fire, identical with the finest air, and the way upward from earth and water to fire and life. Both movements are everywhere intertwined with each other. All is identical and not identical. We step down a second time into the same stream, yet not the same. All things flow. Finite things arise out of strife and enmity, from the divine original fire, to which, on the contrary, harmony and peace lead back." This was the doctrine which the Stoics afterward took up and elaborated, and it is this theory, substantially, which underlies the doctrine of evolution when this doctrine is separated from theism and made to do duty as a complete and sufficient explanation of the universe. This was the idea which Tennyson was trying to express in one of his earlier poems, afterward discarded:

"All thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are true,
All visions wild and strange;
Man is the measure of all truth
Unto himself. All truth is change.
All men do walk in sleep, and all
Have faith, in that they dream;
For all things are as they seem to all,
And all things flow like a stream.

"There is no rest, no calm, no praise,
Nor good, nor ill, nor light, nor shade,
Nor essence, nor eternal laws,
For nothing is, but all is made.
But if I dream that all things are,
They are to me for that I dream;
For all things are as they seem to all
And all things flow like a stream."

Both these conceptions, as we have seen, — the conception of permanency in the relations of things — of a fixed and constant order — and the conception of constant change, — must be somehow combined and steadily held together, if we are to get the meaning of life. Constancy there must be, and there must be transiency also. We must stand still, and we must move forward. "Haste not! rest not!" cry to us, from the skies above, the angels of our destiny.

The value of permanency in relations becomes clear to us, after a moment's thought. We see at once, upon the scale of national existence, how essential to all national growth is some fixity of occupation. That, indeed, can scarcely be called a

nation which does not permanently occupy some definite portion of the earth's surface; until it settles down and defines and defends its boundaries it is no more than a wandering tribe. The nomads live an incoherent and unfruitful life; they have no literature except folk-songs that live in the memory; none but the rudest art; nothing that is worthy the name of history, for history is a record of progress, and the story of these nomadic tribes is only a bundle of annals and traditions. Before a people can grow, before it can bring forth the blossoms of art and the riper fruits of civilization, it must become rooted, like a tree, in the soil.

We find the same law governing the economic life of our households. We must be planted somewhere, if we want to flourish. Constant shifting of the location is fatal to prosperity. "The rolling stone gathers no moss."

The family itself is meant to be a permanent social organization. In order that fidelity, trust, tenderness, sympathy, mutual respect, mutual forbearance, that all the beautiful traits of the most perfect character may be developed, human beings must be brought together in these rooted relations of the home. In promiscuous and unstable groups none of these virtues would have a name to live. It is because husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters are bound together

by imperishable ties, that the domestic virtues exist among us; and all the other virtues, social and national, are but the development of these.

And when we come to study the elements of the highest individual development, we see at once that a character in which there are no fixed principles, no stable elements, is worthless. The best man, the highest type of man, is one who can be depended on. You know where to find him. There are principles of conduct, clearly defined to his understanding, which he steadily follows, from which he does not swerve. Probably, also, he is a man of steady habits. A large part of his life is under the law of habit. Courtesy, kindness, truthfulness, resistance to wrong, promptness in meeting obligations, — these and many other virtues have become habitual with him. Many of these higher actions are now in a measure automatic. They are not the result of reflection, deliberation, choice; they are instinctive manifestations of his personality. Any character which we recognize as really strong and beautiful and admirable, possesses much of this fixed and permanent material.

The value of permanency in the national, the domestic, the social, the individual life, is thus at once made evident.

On the other hand, there is a divine transiency whose uses we must not overlook. On the national

scale, what a mighty factor in the development of the higher civilization has migration been. All the great nations have been migratory. From the time when Abraham moved west from Mesopotamia, and our Aryan ancestors started from their home in Central Asia, the harvests of the world's knowledge and power have been reaped by peoples who followed the star of empire. The soil of England, France, Germany, America, is all tenanted to-day by nations that came from the far east, and that never would have been what they are to-day if they had stayed in their old nests.

And even of religions we may affirm that those are most fruitful which are least confined. "Nearly every great religion," says Mr. Alden, "has flourished in its transplantations rather than in its original birthplace. Every historic movement is like a harmonic series, having its dominant, through which is begun a new series. Through flight or exile or wandering, the divine purposes are accomplished." The faith of Abraham was purified on the plains of Palestine; the Pilgrim Fathers, who sought the western shore of the Atlantic because of that great hope and inward zeal they had of building on this continent the kingdom of God, left behind them many of the fetters wherewith faith was bound, and made room for the word of the Lord to run and be glorified.

Our homes, even, have in themselves the ele-

ments of change, and they are not the least sacred elements. The sentiments, the motives cherished in the home, tend to scatter, after a little, the inmates of the home. "Love," says one, "hath this homing instinct so fixed that it must needs have its dominant or variant centre in marriage, so that there may be at least new homes." The children who have been nurtured thus in love, who have learned at their father's and mother's feet the blessedness of affection, must needs have homes of their own; and soon they take their departure and leave us desolate.

> "To hear, to heed, to wed,
> Fair lot that maidens choose;
> Thy mother's tenderest words are said,
> Thy face no more she views.
> Thy mother's lot, my dear,
> She doth in naught accuse;
> Her lot to bear, to nurse, to rear,
> To love — and then to lose."

We said that permanence is essential to the development of family life; who shall say that this impermanence is any less essential? Who does not see that these very vicissitudes with which family affection is beset impart to it new tenderness? Who does not know that the scattering of the brood often strengthens the love that binds them together?

And while, as I have said, some fixity of tenure is

needful that character may be sanely developed, yet the course of Providence seems to be ordered for the very purpose of unsettling and disturbing our lives. In spite of ourselves we often find it impossible to tarry in one place. "No sooner," says Dr. Bushnell, "do we begin to settle, as we fancy, and become fixed, than some new turn arrives by which we are shaken loose and sorely tossed. When the prophet declares that He will overturn, overturn, overturn, he gives in that single word a general account of God's polity in all human affairs. The world is scarcely turned on its axis more certainly than it is overturned by the revolutions of Providence. It seems to be even a law, in every sort of business or trade, that nothing shall stand on its lees. Credit is a bubble bursting every hour at some gust of change. What we call securities, are well called insecurities. Titles themselves give way, and even real estate becomes unreal under our feet. Nor is it only we ourselves that unsettle the security of things. Nature herself conspires to loosen all our calculations, meeting us with her frosts, her blastings, her droughts, her storms, her fevers, and forbidding us even to be sure of that for which we labor. Markets and market prices faithfully represent the unsteadiness of our objects. The design appears to be to turn us hither and thither, allowing us no chance to stagnate in any sort of benefit or security. Even the

most successful, who seem in our view to go straight to their mark, get on, after all, rather by a dexterous and continual shifting, so as to keep their balance and exactly meet the changing conditions that befall them. Nor is there anything to sentimentalize over in this ever shifting, overturning process, which must be encountered in all the works of life, — no place for sighing, 'Vanity of vanities!' There is no vanity in it, any more than in the mill that winnows and separates the grain." [1]

If such are the providential disarrangements and developments of our lives, who shall say that instability is not, in its way, as great a good as stability?

So, when we come to study the great laws of personal character, we find that transiency, as well as permanence, has its place in our development. We said that the best men were men of fixed principles and steady habits. That is true; and yet they are men who in very many respects have changed and greatly changed. Their opinions have passed through many mutations. Beliefs which they once held they have ceased to hold. Probably their conduct, in many important respects, follows different rules from those which formerly gave the law to it. The man who has changed in no particular since he came to manhood — who has modified none of his theories, who has gained no

[1] *Sermons for the New Life*, p. 417.

practical wisdom — is not the best sort of man. The political and the theological Bourbons, who learn nothing and forget nothing, are the men who make revolutions necessary; and the necessary revolutions never fail to arrive, in the fullness of time. The great men, the strong men, are the men in whose intellectual history you trace a constant progress. When Dr. Wayland was president of Brown University, and professor of moral science, his eldest son, who was a senior, in reciting to him one day, drew from his father, by a question, the expression of a certain opinion. "The esteemed author of this book," said the young man, holding up his father's text-book on moral science which the class was using, "holds a different opinion." "The author of that book, my son," said Dr. Wayland quietly, "knows more now than he did ten years ago." The teacher of any science who does not know more now than he did ten years ago, who never finds occasion to modify and qualify and reshape his utterances, is probably a cheap and poor sort of teacher.

There is nothing in these truths that can be called novel; I have only desired to hold these two elements of experience before your thought to show you how utterly contradictory they are, how mutually exclusive they seem to be, and yet how absolutely essential each of them is. And now what lesson can we draw from this study? Are we deal-

ing merely with curious phenomena, or have they some clear instruction for us?

Possibly, we may find in the view that has come before us a principle of judgment that shall make us more cautious and more sane in all our reasonings and our conclusions. We may be led to question, sometimes, whether the view which we as partisans have taken is not a half truth. It is a common thing for honest and fairly sensible people to say, "We *know* that *this*, which we believe and affirm, is true; that which you believe and affirm exactly contradicts it; therefore we know that it is false." Now that is logic, but it is not life; and one of the first lessons for all of us to learn is that there are a thousand facts of life that cannot be brought under the laws of our formal logic. We have to learn that truth of experience often bears two contrasted aspects — that one of them is just as true as the other, and that we are never thoroughly sane in our judgments till we get fast hold of both of them, and hold them firmly over against each other in our thought, letting them reconcile themselves as best they can.

Perhaps, also, this discussion may have suggested to us some defect in our own characters, as to overplus of one of these essential elements and deficiency in the other. Perhaps, when we come to think of it, we shall find that there is either not enough stability in our characters, or else that there is not

enough mobility. Perhaps, as we have been thinking this matter over we have become conscious that we are too erratic, too volatile; that we have not sufficient firmness and solidity in our dispositions; that we fly too quickly from one opinion to another, from one friendship to another, from one pursuit to another; that the permanent and stable elements in our lives are sadly wanting. I am sure that I am speaking to some of whom this is true; I wonder if it has come into their minds this morning that it is true, and that the truth is one that ought to cause them anxiety. Perhaps, on the other hand, some have become conscious that theirs is the contrary defect; that their thoughts are too stereotyped, their lives too monotonous; that their minds are naturally inhospitable to new truth; that they are quite too content to walk in well-trodden paths, and keep right on saying and doing the same things over and over from year to year; that there is not so much freshness as there ought to be in their thinking, and not so much enterprise as there ought to be in their work; that what they need more than anything else is to be shaken out of their old ruts; to get rid of a lot of their worn-out rubbish of maxims and theories, and to take in a fresh stock of new ones; to start in new lines of work and to get as far away from their old selves as they can. I am equally sure that there are some before me of whom this is true, and I trust that the truth may have

been borne in upon their minds while we have been talking this matter over.

It is evident that the right thing to do is to coördinate these two contrasted tendencies; to keep them fairly balanced; never to let our stability degenerate into stagnation, or our mobility into fickleness; to have enough of permanence in our thoughts and habits to give strength and solidity to our characters, and enough of freshness and motion in our ideas and activities to keep our minds young and our lives vital and fruitful. That is the problem, but how to solve it — there 's the rub. Who will teach us the proper formula? Who will give us the scale on which we may measure and test the strength of these contrasted tendencies? No man can do it. It is utterly impossible to frame any coherent statement, any practicable rule for the determination of this matter. Logic, philosophy, practical morals, are powerless here. To keep the balance between stability and mobility — that is the problem; but how shall we know when we are keeping it? There is not a fossil in this congregation who does not think that he has found the golden mean, nor a flighty fanatic either. How can we convince them of their one-sidedness? How can we assure ourselves that we are holding the scales evenly?

I have thought much on this question, and I can find but one answer. I believe that it is a problem for whose solution the human reason is not ade-

quate. There are many points in our experience where logic breaks down, where philosophy confesses that it is at the end of its tether, — and this is one of them. Standing here, before this question, so momentous, and so far beyond my skill, I confront one of the emergencies in which I need a wisdom superior to my own. There is such a wisdom, I know; for I see it at work in the world round about me. The Power who knows how perfectly to balance attraction and repulsion in the constitution of matter; how perfectly to match the centripetal and the centrifugal forces; how wisely to reconcile progress with permanence in the ongoings of history, is a Power to whom the secret is known which I wish to possess. Is it possible for me to put myself under his influence, to submit myself to his guidance, to breathe his spirit? I believe that it is; and I expect to find, in communion with Him, the inspiration by which I shall be calmed and steadied and quickened and invigorated; by which I shall be able to abide in quietness and confidence, yet rest not day nor night; by which, without any anxious pondering or measuring, I shall know instinctively when to stand still, and when to go forward; when to take root, and when to take wings; how to wait and receive, and how to work and win.

V

KNOWING HOW TO BE POOR

I know how to be abased. — PHIL. iv. 12.

THIS letter of Paul to his friends in Philippi gives us a beautiful revelation of the nature of friendship. The bond that united the apostle with the converts whom he had left behind in the Macedonian city was strong and tender. The whole story of his association with Philippi is somewhat idyllic. He had been traveling through Asia Minor and had come down to the shores of the Ægean at Troas, and in the night he had had a vision or dreamed a dream of a man standing by him beseeching him and saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." That was accepted as a divine call, and he sailed at once for Neapolis and passed thence to Philippi, a little way inland, the city where Octavius and Antony won their great battle over Brutus and Cassius eighty or ninety years before. It was a Roman colony, and a commercial town of some importance, with a Jewish element in its population. Here the apostle, with his companions Silas and Luke, tarried several days. When the Sabbath came, they went outside the gate to a place

by a river-side, "where," Luke says, "we supposed there was a place of prayer." The words intimate that they had no definite information about it; but they were looking for a place of worship, and they found it, on the banks of this stream, outside the city walls. Probably it was out of doors, perhaps under the shade of trees that grew by the river-side. Prayer places in the neighborhood of running water the Jews were apt to choose, because of the need of ablutions before their worship. The worshipers by this river-side, on this particular Sabbath, were women; if any men were there, they are not mentioned; and Paul and his two companions sat down with them upon the bank and told them the story which they were telling everywhere, about the coming of the Messiah; the fulfillment, for which they had been so long waiting, of the prophecies of their Scriptures; the story of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Luke's narrative goes on: "And a certain woman named Lydia, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."

Thus was Christianity planted in Europe. The

first European convert was a woman, and the first church was organized in her house. How long Paul and his friends tarried here we do not know; it must have been a considerable time. The converts were not all women; men were gathered in; the church was furnished with pastors and deacons, a full official complement, it would seem; and all went prosperously until an outbreak of heathen opposition interrupted their labors, threw Paul and Silas into prison, and resulted in their sudden departure from Philippi.

Twice, at least, in after years, Paul revisited this flock, and strengthened the bonds which had been so closely knit in his first sojourn among them. And when he was a prisoner at Rome, this was the only church which succeeded in reaching him with relief for his necessities. It was not, indeed, an easy problem to convey such bounty, in those days, through long distances; the telegraphic order and the express messenger were wanting; the only way was to go and carry it. The messenger of the Philippian church risked his life in going to Rome, and was dangerously ill of a fever after he reached there, probably on account of his exposure. This letter of Paul's to his friends in Philippi acknowledges their kindness, shown him at such cost. It was a welcome relief that came through the hands of Epaphroditus, and the best part of it was the proof of their affection. "Not

that I speak in respect of want," he says, "for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

It is a strong claim that the apostle makes for himself. He has gained the mastery of external conditions. His life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses, and his happiness is not affected by the diminution of these things. He knows that plenty, if it came to him, would not hurt him, and that poverty cannot disturb his peace.

"I know how to be abased," — how to have my fortunes brought low; I know how to be hungry, and in want; I know how to be poor.

Let us think, a little while, upon the value of this kind of knowledge. Is it not worth possessing?

Some of you are saying that it is a kind of knowledge which you, at any rate, have a good chance of acquiring, since you are poor and have always been poor, and see no brilliant prospect of escaping from that condition. We all say these things facetiously, and even those who to the eye of the multitude are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing, often seem to be and sometimes are oppressed with a sense of want. The things which they have

not gotten are so many when compared with the things that they have, that it makes them feel poor. It is a commonplace to say that poverty is a relative term; and that it is apt to be used subjectively. The man is poor who feels poor. If, however, we should undertake to fix some kind of scientific standard; if, for example, we should say that those Americans may be regarded as poor whose income is less than the average income, counting all the people of the country, black and white, native born and foreign born — then it is doubtful whether we should find many poor persons in this room. If the entire national income were divided equally, if Mr. Morgan's share and Mr. Rockefeller's share and Mr. Schwab's share, and the shares of all the rest, were put into a common fund and divided by seventy millions, — or whatever the national population may be, — it is probable that nearly every one in this room would receive less than he is receiving now, — most of us a great deal less. Such a division would not, I think, give us an average, per individual, of more than fifty or sixty cents a day to live upon. Few of us, therefore, have really had a very good chance as yet to learn how to be poor, in any true sense of that word. Yet it is entirely possible that some of us may yet be compelled to face that condition. There is no guarantee that we shall all be able to keep our incomes above the average, and to live in the comparative plenty which

that fact implies. Sickness or accident or misfortune may bring any of us down to the point where Paul had sometimes found himself, — where we shall be in real want; where the absolute necessaries of life will be hard to get. And those of us who are far from being poor now may yet be a great deal poorer than we are; may be compelled to descend to conditions which would now seem to us conditions of hardship and destitution. It is a pertinent question, therefore, a very practical question, whether we know how to be poor, if it must come to that.

The question is not whether we know how to become poor, to reduce ourselves to a condition of want; most of us know that far too well. The indolence, the inefficiency, the wastefulness, whereby men sink into destitution and keep themselves there, are not lessons which any of us need to learn. For we are not to regard this as the desirable condition; poverty is not to be chosen by any of us as a vocation. That is the monastic ideal, but we do not recognize it as the proper ideal for any human being. We may be willing to live simply and plainly; we may accept poverty cheerfully, if it comes to us in the providence of God, and we cannot help ourselves; but we are not to choose to be in want; we are to do what we can to keep ourselves out of penury, and to maintain ourselves in decency and comfort.

It is not, then, the skill to impoverish ourselves that we need to cultivate, but the skill to use pov-

erty, if come it must, with profit to ourselves and to the world. How to live *well* in poverty is the lesson that Paul has learned; and the lesson that we must learn.

It is needful to learn it, because, as I have already suggested, any of us may be called to practice it, and we ought to be ready for any fate. The failure of life often occurs at this very point. There are many who, having been born and reared in good circumstances, and having lived in comparative comfort, are reduced to narrow conditions, and then find themselves utterly unable to adjust themselves to the simpler and humbler manner of life. In their prosperity they were self-respectful and contented and hopeful; in their adversity they have become shamefaced and misanthropic and wretched; they are inclined to assume that their neighbors have lost their regard for them; they dwell upon their discomforts and limitations, and magnify and mourn their losses; life has distinctly less value to them because they have lost some portion of their estate. They seem to have known how to live a fairly good life in plenty, but they do not know how to live well in poverty. That is a grave defect. Their education has been sadly neglected in one important particular.

What, then, is involved in this knowledge which Paul boasts, — of being able to live well in poverty?

The man who knows how to live well in poverty

must know how to live independently. Paul does not mean that he knows how to be a pauper or a beggar. That lesson he never learned. He was never chargeable, as he says, upon any one. He accepted contributions for his support which came voluntarily, recognizing his right to receive such aid, that thus he might be able to devote his entire time to the work of the ministry ; but he never asked for contributions, and he never accepted them unless they were freely given. He worked at his own trade of tent-making when the support failed ; he was not unwilling to dig, but to beg he was ashamed. He knew how to keep out of the slimy paths of mendicancy. No man has learned to live well in poverty who has not learned that lesson.

To live well in poverty involves, therefore, some economic skill. To make the most of a small income was part, perhaps, of what Paul had learned. There are those who can get sustenance and comfort and enjoyment out of resources upon which others would pine and starve. Life can be sustained, if one only knows how, upon a very small income. Henry Thoreau lived in the Walden woods eight months for $\$33.87\frac{1}{2}$, — a little more than four dollars a month. He gives us an itemized account of his expenditures, and we can see that the thing can be done. And it is surprising to observe how healthily and comfortably some men and women can live upon small resources ; how much strength

and beauty can be found by some in an allowance which to others would mean squalor and barrenness. It is a beautiful art — the art of living well down here on this lower plane. It calls for an alert intelligence, and a cultivated taste, and a ready invention. It is not the vocation of a dullard. Brains must be mixed with it. One who takes it up with courage and good-will finds in it culture for all the finer faculties.

But we have been dealing only with the rudiments of this high knowledge. To know how to live well upon scanty revenues, one must have gotten some new standards of value — some revised notions of what is really worth while. The estimates of the street and the exchange and the drawing-room can never be followed by one who seeks this knowledge. Much that men prize and lavish large incomes upon is desirable only because it is scarce and costly. Much that is of the highest value, like heaven, is ours for the asking. What one chiefly needs who seeks to live well on a small income, is the power to discriminate between values that are real and values that are adventitious.

This means, of course, a mind well trained to think, and think sanely, upon the problems of life; an intellect emancipated from the bonds of use and wont, able to put its own estimates upon life and hold them quietly and firmly in the face of a sneering or a frowning world. The sources of your

wisdom and your peace must be in yourself, not in the judgments or preferences of your neighbors, if you are going to live well in poverty. If what other people think about your manner of life is a great concern to you, that is an impossible task. This present world will have the power to make you very miserable in such conditions, if you are looking to it for guidance and approval.

Suppose that you have gained the power of choosing your own portion, what will you find indispensable to the good and happy life?

1. You must have, of course, an adequate supply of the primal physical necessities, — sustenance, shelter, warmth, covering. But these, as we have seen, may be very simple and inexpensive.

2. You must have food, appetizing and nourishing food, for the mind. Of that you need not be deprived. Of that there is no lack. Even of that concentrated and highly organized form of mental nourishment which we find in the best books, you can have all you want, in these days, almost literally without money and without price. The poorest may, in this respect, be almost as rich as the richest. The great books of all the ages, more of them than you can ever dream of reading, are within your reach, no matter how poor you may be.

Better than all, the great Book of Nature is wide open before your eyes every day. What a store of stimulating instruction is thus spread before you!

What mysteries are here to pique your curiosity; what problems to challenge your thought; what wonders to elicit your admiration! Poverty may prevent you from spending upon such studies all the time that you would like to spend, but it cannot shut you out from this realm; the humblest and most heavily laden of the sons of toil has opportunities of intellectual enjoyment and profit which are simply priceless, if he has only the mind to seize and improve them. And there is such refreshment and stimulus in these things as no man finds in the goods of the market.

3. You must have pleasure, too; the higher enjoyments of the senses and the imagination must be within your reach. And these, also, the best of them, are free to all. Nature, who waits to be the poor man's tutor, who flings open her laboratories and bids him enter, who matriculates him, from his childhood, if he will, in her great university, — Nature herself organizes for him a perpetual festival of pure and high enjoyment. Such spectacles as she prepares for him in the firmament above and in the earth beneath; such miracles of form and color in cloudscapes and sunsets; such restful delights for the eye in soft meadows and hill slopes; such wonders of arboreal beauty in forests and groves and willows by the watercourses; such symphonies in color as charm his eye from many a wayside bank in May; such orchestras as are tuned for

him at daybreak on every summer morning, — what is there to compare with all this, in the costliest art with which the rich man can surround himself? Of all this his choicest pleasures are but a feeble imitation. The poor man cannot have the counterfeit; but he can have the real thing, much of it even without the asking, all of it at the smallest cost; for a few cents will bear him away from the filthy city into the fields and the woods where all outdoors waits to crown him monarch of imperial delights.

The beneficence of our later civilization is manifest also in the fact that even in the cities the poorest of the poor may have lawns and gardens far finer than the richest can provide for themselves, the parks and pleasure-grounds which are free to all offering to all of us a common enjoyment of all that is fairest in nature.

The flowers, too, what democrats they are! How glad they are to share their fragrance and their glory with the humblest of us. The royal rose, if she be invited to a garden party in some poor man's backyard, goes in her best array and smiles upon him as benignly as if he were an earl. All she asks is love and care, and she will take up her abode with him, and lavish on him all her loveliness. I have never seen roses fairer, or clematis of a more piercing purple, or sweet peas with more delicate fragrance, or carnations of princelier rank, than some I have seen growing in the little gardens of the poor.

Other delights there are quite within the reach of the poorest. One sign that the New Jerusalem is coming down out of heaven from God is the multiplication by science of the beauties of art, so that good copies of the best of these are given away or sold for a song; and the poorest housewife, if her eye is trained to know them, can adorn her home with pictures such as only the richest could have owned a century ago.

If, therefore, the good and happy life implies some pure and high pleasures here below, there is still no reason on this score why the good and happy life should not be lived by those whose incomes are very narrow.

4. To live well, in poverty, one must have friends. The best kind of life cannot be lived alone. It means fellowship, comradeship, the sharing of thoughts and hopes with others. No man is sufficient unto himself. Every man's life must be invigorated, restrained, chastened, inspired by that interdependence which is the normal lot of human beings. Nor is this an impossible condition even in the lot of poverty. The social functions of the four hundred must of course be renounced, and there are those to whom that would seem rather worse than to be shut out of heaven, but such is not really the case. Good and fruitful friendships can be formed outside those inclosures. Even among the very poor the soil for such culture is not wanting. Those who

are well worth knowing, and whose companionship would be full of profit, may be found among the least prosperous. Nor do I mean to say that there are no possibilities of friendship for the poor man among the most prosperous. Fashionable society would have no room for him, of course; but many of the men and women who are found in fashionable society would be glad to number among their friends a man in lowly life, whose mind was open to high thoughts and whose heart was full of the enthusiasm of humanity; who was neither afraid of them nor ashamed of himself; who knew that even though his neighbor might live in a fine house, "a man's a man for a' that." A man who will show himself friendly, and who is worthy of friendship, will not lack for friends in this world, even though he is poor. And there is a certain large advantage that a poor man has in forming genuine friendships. He knows that those who offer him the suffrages of their affection are not moved by mercenary reasons. It is not his possessions that they are coveting, for he has none; it is for what he is in himself that they seek association with him. Friendship is a great good of life which is not beyond the poor man's reach.

5. To live the good and happy life one must have interests beyond himself. Not only friendships, but social services and aims must enlist his affection. His own well-being is linked with the well-being of

humanity; self finds its completion in the good which is common to all. The poor man, not less than the rich man, is called to a self-forgetful service, and enters into life only through sharing the life of his fellow men. Nor is this a privilege from which poverty excludes any man. Those whose material resources are the smallest can think and wish for the welfare of their fellow men. If they cannot endow colleges or build hospitals, if they do not often get their names into the newspapers, they can find many ways of ministering to the welfare of others, of promoting, most efficiently, the public welfare. The greater part of the best charity is the work of the very poor, who, in a thousand neighborly kindnesses, serve one another. And the best field for the service of the community is that in which the poor man spends his life. How much can be done by any humble man of clear understanding, wide knowledge, and high ideals, in his personal contact with men of his own class, in pointing out to them the truth they need to know, and in guiding them toward wise action! They will hear him gladly, while the words of one from a higher social rank would fall upon unheeding ears. The social opportunity, the philanthropic opportunity, the patriotic opportunity of the poor man, must not be undervalued. For him there are great and beautiful services, and the rewards that go with them. We are always wishing for money, that we might do good

with it. If we could only comprehend how little there is, after all, of real good that money can do, and how much there is of the most beautiful and noble work that can be done without money, we should see that one chief element of the good and happy life is not at all beyond the power of those who are poor.

6. But there is a better reason than any which we have yet considered, for believing that the good and happy life is possible to people of small incomes and narrow resources. The sources of blessedness lie deeper than our analysis has yet gone. For man, who is the child of God, and who lives and moves and has his being in God, enters into the fullness of life only when that relation is well understood, and the significance of it becomes the fundamental fact of experience. If we have a Father in heaven, infinitely wise and good, with infinite resources; if we know that his love can never fail; that all things are working together for good to those whom He loves, how much does it really signify whether our earthly possessions are few or many? There is no room for solicitude or fear; all our real wants are provided for. "Be not anxious for your life," is the word that comes to us, "what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not,

neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not of much more value than they?"

Well, is it really true? Is there a shelter and a strong tower here into which we may run and be safe? Certainly it was a truth which Jesus believed, absolutely; and upon which he lived. He knew how to be poor, to live the good life in poverty. What the manner of that life may have been during the thirty years when he was following the trade of a carpenter, we do not know; doubtless it was a life, in very moderate circumstances, of self-respecting independence. During his public ministry we know how limited were his material resources: "The foxes have holes," he said, "and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He knew how to be abased. Could any of us have chosen for him a better fortune? Could any of us conceive that a greater measure of worldly prosperity would have added anything to the glory or the blessedness of the greatest life ever lived in human flesh?

We may say of Paul, whose testimony we are studying, almost the same thing that we have said of Jesus. In this respect the disciple was as his Master and the servant as his Lord. Paul's work was done in absolute disregard of worldly gain. The last thing he thought about was economic efficiency. To be faithful to the great trust committed

to him, as he tells us in this very epistle, he had suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but refuse.

I am not pointing to the poverty of Jesus and Paul as exemplary for us; it may be that we are not called to follow them in this; but I want you to see that the two greatest lives that were ever lived in the world were lived in absolute poverty; and that what made these lives so large and lustrous and free and bountiful, what gave them such perfect mastery of outward conditions, was the constant sense of the presence of God, the implicit and unquestioning trust in his goodness. What can any man care, if he knows that, about the small losses or adversities of this mortal life? "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" cries Paul; "shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or *famine*, or *nakedness*, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." With such a conviction as this in our hearts, what can disturb us? Dwindling resources can cause us no anxiety; want can but deepen our trust; death itself can do nothing worse for us than open the door into the Father's house where there is enough and to spare.

This, then, is the secret which Paul says that he has learned, by which he can make the conditions of poverty tributary to his well-being. It is not a

secret which he sought to keep, it is one which he longed to share with all his fellow men. You and I may learn it, as he learned it; and if we know Jesus Christ as he knew him his secret will be ours.

So much, then, we have found easily within the reach of the man of meagre income; he may have, besides the supply of his actual physical necessities, high knowledge in abundance, pure and stimulating pleasures, precious friendships, great opportunities of social service, — above all, he may have the abiding sense of the presence of God in his daily life, and the assurance that nothing can separate him from that unfailing love. Do you think that the man who knows that all this is true of him is likely to pity himself very much on account of straitened circumstances or narrowing revenues?

Let us try to learn to estimate rightly these larger resources which may be ours, if we will, and of which no misfortune can deprive us.

I do not wish to sink into poverty, — so any of us might say, — I do not like discomfort; I prefer a reasonable competence. But that is not granted to all God's children, and, with no fault of my own, it may sometime come to pass that my earthly fortunes will be brought low. If that should befall, I trust that I shall still be able to live the good and happy life. I will not forget how many of the best and bravest of the children of men have lived and wrought in poverty; I will not

forget old Benedict Spinoza grinding lenses and refusing largesses, yet stirring the world with his great thoughts; I will not forget Michael Faraday, living on the wages of a common laborer while he forged the tools with which the world's industries have been revolutionized; I will not forget Dante Alighieri, wearing out his old age in exile and want, yet singing his deathless song; I will not forget Richard Wagner, spending all the strength of his youth and manhood in a desperate struggle with want, and giving to the world in those dark days an imperishable legacy; I will not forget Thomas Carlyle, there on the bleak Scottish moors, fighting the wolf from the door and sounding a trumpet that waked the dead in "Signs of the Times" and "Sartor Resartus;" nay, I will not forget him whom above all others I ought to remember, — whose disciple I profess to be. God's well-beloved Son was he, yet he was very poor; for our sakes he was poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. Was not God good to him? Let me never, with the memory of that great Son of man in my thought, say or think that because I am poor God has forsaken me. Let me never doubt that He whom a hundred generations have found to be "a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress," is my Friend in the day of adversity, and that He will help me then and there, if I trust Him, to live the good and happy life.

VI

KNOWING HOW TO BE RICH

I know how to abound. — Phil. iv. 12.

We studied last Sunday morning one of Paul's great claims of mastery over the conditions of life. "I know how to be abased," he said, "and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want." Knowing how to be poor was our theme last Sunday, — the art of living well in straitened circumstances. To-day we will consider Paul's other claim, — that he had learned the secret of living well in abundance as well as in want.

Just how his present conditions justified this claim, it is difficult to see. He says, indeed, in a sentence soon following those I have just quoted, that at this writing he is enjoying abundance. "I have all things and abound," he says, "having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." The language is emotional; and it is fair to conclude that this abundance, of which he makes such grateful mention, was prob-

ably a very meagre provision for his actual wants while in the Roman prison. We cannot imagine that his friends in Philippi had so enriched him by their gifts that he was able to live in luxury.

We have also the best reasons for believing that his life during all his missionary journeys was one of hardship and privation; we cannot suppose that anything approximating to what we should call abundance was ever known by him in all these years of labor for the kingdom.

Yet he says that he knows how to be rich as well as how to be poor; that he has learned the secret of living well in plenty as well as in poverty. It may be that Paul had not been wholly without experience of life in prosperous conditions. We know little of his parentage and early history; but his home was in Tarsus of Cilicia, a Roman city of some importance in Asia Minor, the seat of a university; and Paul's father, who was, of course, a Jew, had become a Roman citizen, which fact might suggest good standing in the community. There is some evidence in Paul's writings that the culture of that centre of Greek learning had made some impression upon his mind, and that would indicate a fair social position. In his youth he was sent up to Jerusalem to study the Jewish law in the school of Gamaliel: that fact, though not conclusive, is at least in harmony with the theory that he was the child of prosperity. He may, therefore, have known

by experience something of the problems of character which confront those who have abundance. The power which he now boasts to handle such problems must, however, have been gained since the days of his prosperity; and when he says that he knows how to live well in abundance, his knowledge is probably based on faith rather than experience. He may know by experience what the rich man's problems are, — because he remembers what they were when he was living in plenty; but it is by faith that he knows that he would be able to solve them if they should now arise in his life. He is perfectly sure that in all places and under all circumstances he will be able to do the right thing, because he trusts absolutely in the divine wisdom and strength by which his life is guided. "I am equal," he says, "to any fate. I know how to be abased and I know how to abound. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

What a splendid outfit such a faith as that gives a man! It is not self-confidence, nor anything like it; it is confidence in the unerring wisdom and strength of that spirit of truth and grace with which his life is indissolubly joined.

"I know how to be rich," says Paul, — not, mark you, how to *get* rich. That is no part of his claim. That, doubtless, is to most of us the burning question. If Paul had anything of importance to tell us about that, most of us would prick up our ears. If

I could convince this community that I had valuable secrets to impart respecting the methods of getting rich, this house would not hold the people who would come to listen. But this knowledge of Paul's is nothing of that kind. Whether he knew how to make himself rich or not, I do not know; if he did, it was knowledge that he did not value and never tried to impart. For myself, I am sure that I have no knowledge on this subject worth anything to anybody; and I believe that I can truthfully say that I never greatly coveted such knowledge. It is not of knowing how to get rich, then, that we are thinking this morning, but of knowing how to *be* rich, — of knowing how to live well in the possession of abundance. That is the kind of knowledge which the apostle says that he has gained.

But if he rejoices in the fact that he knows how to be rich, it cannot be wrong to be rich. There can be no necessary contradiction between the good and happy life and the possession of abundance. That is certainly a fair inference from these words of Paul.

How does this agree with the testimony of Jesus concerning the possession of riches? Are not his judgments clear and strong upon this matter? Did he not say that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God? Did he not say, "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom"? Did he not say, "Whosoever he be of you that

renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"? Did he not require the disciples who followed him to leave all they had behind them? Did he not tell that rich young man who wanted to be his follower that the first condition of discipleship was to sell all he had, and give to the poor? Certainly these words are all there, and there are enough of them to make a strong case if one adopts the method of interpreting Jesus which is quite too prevalent, and selects the passages which make for his theory, neglecting those which cannot be reconciled with it.

But other things must be taken into the account before we determine what was our Lord's attitude toward wealth and its possession. We must not forget that a number of rich men and women were his friends, — Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Zacchæus, Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, women of substance. "The home at Bethany," says Dr. Peabody, "in which Jesus repeatedly found tranquil release from the pressure of his public life, was a home of comfort, if not of luxury, and there was in it an [alabaster box of] ointment of spikenard, very precious." Such a possession could hardly have been found in a poor man's home. And there is no hint that Jesus ever reproved any of these friends of his for the possession of the wealth which must have raised them far above the common economic level.

Moreover, we must also remember that the parables of Jesus often assume that the possession of wealth is a good thing. In the parables of the talents and the pounds, in the story of the unjust steward, the ownership and productive use of property is recognized as legitimate. It is impossible to believe that Jesus would have used these illustrations of accumulation and large possession to set forth the great truths of his kingdom, if he had regarded such processes and results as essentially evil. He could not have confounded the moral sense of his hearers by making an essentially bad thing the symbol of an essentially good thing.

Over against the epigrammatic sentences, and the incidents first referred to, in which Jesus seems to condemn and forbid wealth, we must therefore place the whole tenor of his life and the constant implications of his teaching in which it is justified. And I think that we must hold both these classes of teachings, which seem so contradictory, steadily together, and accept the full value of both of them. Holding them so, we shall get from the teaching of Jesus some such result as this, — that it is possible for the rich man to live the good and happy life, but that there are tremendous perils environing great fortunes, perils which nothing but ceaseless vigilance and strenuous purpose can successfully avoid. This is involved, also, in Paul's assertion. The implication is that it is not less hard to live

the good life in abundance than to live the good life in poverty; that it takes as much grace and as much heroism and as much divine wisdom to know how to abound as it does to know how to be abased. Either of these extreme conditions furnishes a severe test of the character. A wise man, indeed, was Agur, the son of Jakeh, when he prayed: —

> "Give me neither poverty nor riches;
> Feed me with the food that is needful for me:
> Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?
> Or lest I be poor, and steal,
> And use profanely the name of my God."

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Blessed are they who are able to keep in this safe *via media*. But as there are many on the one side who feel throughout their lives the pinch of poverty, so there are some in every generation who by inheritance, or by their own strenuous effort, find themselves walking in the dangerous paths of opulence.

The truth on which we want to fix our thought this morning is that it is possible, even for the rich man, to live the good life. But what does this imply?

It must be assumed, in this statement, that the rich man keeps his manhood; that he is not merged and lost in his fortune; that he continues to be the master and not the slave of his money. The man in the depths of poverty is in danger of losing his

manhood and becoming a mendicant; the man on the heights of affluence is in equal danger of losing his manhood and becoming a miser or a money-grubber. This is a loss which is not suffered all at once; the process is gradual by which the human qualities, one by one, become blurred or enfeebled, and the conscience becomes commercialized, and the sympathies atrophied, and the whole nature subdued, like the dyer's hand, to that which it works in. The process is insidious; those in whom it is going on are not apt to be aware of it; as wealth accumulates, and the strife becomes more and more absorbing, the tendency to become less and less of a man and more and more of an economic function constantly becomes stronger. The man gradually comes to have no interest in life but money-making; he lives and moves and has his being in that; the larger and finer aspects of human life fade from his consciousness; if he does not gain the whole world he does succeed, by striving after it, in losing himself.

This is the one ever-present, all-encompassing peril with which the pursuit and the possession of great wealth is attended. Knowing how to abound, in Paul's sense of the word, means, therefore, first of all, knowing how to meet and master this evil tendency; how to keep from being dominated and dehumanized by money; how to be a free man and not the slave of things. The man who has become

purely and simply a business man, whose sympathies, thoughts, aims, ambitions, aspirations are all absorbed in business, is a man who does not know how to live well in abundance. He has simply lost the secret of life. He is just as much of a failure as the beggar is, at the other end of the scale. Both have lost their manhood. Both are the victims of circumstance. The one has become a sponge and the other a mere economic function.

When we come to think carefully upon the elements of this high knowledge which Paul boasts, we are struck with the fact that its fruits must be essentially the same in the one condition as in the other. To live well in abundance is to possess the same kind of equipment that one must possess who lives well in straitened conditions.

1. It is just as needful for the rich man who desires to live the good and happy life as it is for the poor man that he should have a well-trained and widely cultured mind. The rich man who despises knowledge, or who undervalues all knowledge which is not directly tributary to the increase of his possessions, is not one who has learned how to live well in prosperity. There are rich men who have very little sense of these higher intellectual values, and we often hear them discouraging education, on the ground that it gives no important aid in the rapid accumulation of wealth. Of any other uses of knowledge they are quite oblivious.

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But it is not necessary that wealth should shut its possessor out of the wide realms of knowledge. It is possible that a man of large affairs should have some interest in the great world in which he lives, and the other worlds moving with it through space; that he should be awake to the marvelous unfoldings of science; that the history of mankind, of its struggles with nature, of its stumbling steps in the way of progress, should kindle his sympathy; that the great literatures of the world should stir his thought and imagination. We have known men of large means and large enterprises who kept their minds open to these liberalizing influences. I had a friend, a broker in Wall Street, who built a small astronomical observatory in his garden and bought a telescope, and freshened and fertilized his mind with his explorations of space. Sir John Lubbock, the great naturalist, is a banker; William Smart, one of the most distinguished of the British economists, is a merchant; Rowland G. Hazard, one of our most thoughtful American writers on philosophy, was a manufacturer. The name, so often in recent days upon our lips, that of Cecil Rhodes, illustrates the possibilities of intellectual interests and occupations for men of great affairs. It is true, I suppose, that Mr. Rhodes was not nearly so rich as he would have been if he had cared less for other things; his partner, who was a man of less brains, made twice as much money. It may, per-

haps, be admitted that the cultivation of such tastes is likely to reduce, somewhat, the man's capacity as a mere absorbent of wealth. If with all his gettings he gets a little understanding, he is probably able to see that money getting is not all that life is for. To say that the acquisition and possession of large wealth is no impediment to generous culture would not be true; it is a great impediment, but it is not an insurmountable obstacle; one who is wise and strong enough may hold the two things together, may live the intellectual life in the midst of great prosperity.

2. It is as true of the rich man as of the poor man, that his life is not complete unless he finds room in it for high and pure pleasures. He needs this refining and elevating influence as much as the poor man needs it. For him the heavens declare the glory of the Lord and the firmament showeth his handiwork; for him the spring keeps its promise, and the mountains display their majesty, and the rivers flow in peace; for him are the anthems of the forest, and the songs of brook and bobolink, and the dear delights of daisies and anemones. He is not a whole man whose life is not open to the suggestions and inspirations which come through these higher enjoyments; no matter how many costly things he may gather about him, if his soul is not attuned to the higher ministries of the Spirit of Beauty — one of the pure spirits always proceeding

from the throne of God — something is wanting to his perfection. But there is no good reason why one whose hands are full of great enterprises should not keep his nature open on this side to pleasures that purify and ennoble life. What I am pleading for is a very different thing from the splendor, the display, the ostentation of expense, with which the lives of the rich and especially of the new rich are apt to be overlaid and incrusted: that is offensive and degrading; the soul that is sensitive to beauty abhors such things. It is in a much simpler life that the genuine love of the beautiful takes root and blossoms. But it is possible for the man who lives in affluence to keep himself free from the sordid fopperies of fashion, and to cultivate a true appreciation of all that is beautiful in nature and in art. The man who knows how to abound is one who knows how to make his abundance enrich and replenish this side of his life.

3. To live well in abundance as well as in poverty, a man must have friends. The solitary life is no better for the rich man than for the poor man. The rich man's life is apt to be one of far wider relations than the poor man's; he touches many more people in more vital ways, and his opportunities of friendship are therefore far more numerous. It seems to be sometimes assumed that business relations are essentially hostile relations; that one

naturally regards those with whom he is brought into contact in trade as rivals or enemies, but that conception is not so prevalent to-day as once it was. It is not now incredible to all of us that a sincere good-will may find expression in a man's business, and that great numbers of those who deal with him may come to regard him as a friend. It seems to me that the man who knows how to live well in large affairs is one who has learned to emphasize in his own thought this element in business; to put an ever increasing amount of good-will into it; to be glad to minister, just as generously as he can, to the welfare of all whom he employs and of all with whom he deals; to be happy in the thought that the enterprises which he is carrying on are making for human welfare.

Of course, the rich man can make friends by his benefactions. The gifts which he bestows on the needy and the suffering may elicit gratitude. The genuine rewards which thus come to him are not to be despised. Of this side of his life I shall have more to say presently. The relation between benefactor and beneficiary is not, however, that of which I am now thinking. Every man needs friends who are in no sense dependents on his bounty; who stand on his own intellectual and moral level and share his life; friends who will not cringe to him, and who could not flatter him; friends in whose manliness and honor he can confide. The rich man, above

all others, needs such friends. There will be many who, for purposes of their own, will be too ready to fawn upon him, and burn the sweet incense of adulation before him. It is difficult for a man who possesses great power, on whose favor many are dependent, to maintain a rational estimate of his own merits and demerits. A large conspiracy is always on foot to inflate his self-conceit. Therefore he needs the comradeship of men who are not afraid of him, and have no favors to ask of him; whose influence over his life will be tonic and bracing. For one who would live well in affluence, that kind of friendship is almost indispensable. The rich man can have such friends if he is man enough to know that he needs them, and will make himself worthy of them.

4. It is a commonplace to say that the man who knows how to abound must be one who knows how to make his abundance tributary to the welfare of his fellow men. To help and serve and bless, to hold all his gains and possessions as a trustee and administer them in such a way as to promote the well-being and happiness of mankind, this is his high calling. The man who liveth unto himself does not live well, whether in abundance or in penury.

It must not, however, be imagined that this is altogether an easy vocation. There are almost always within our reach some cases of real need to which we are sure that we can minister out of our

abundance, and do more good than harm; but a multitude of the most clamorous appeals to the rich man's bounty are wisely disregarded. We often think that if we had plenty of money we could do a great deal of good with it; it is possible that we might do a great deal of harm with it. The administration of large charity is no sinecure. It takes brains, courage, conscientiousness, to dispense it in such a way that its effects shall not be pernicious. The poor man's bounty is far easier to dispense than the rich man's, for the only largesses he has to give are love and thought and care, and they can do no harm, but money is often a doubtful good. The gift without the giver is always bare, and may be baneful. But money can be made to serve if wisdom and love go with it, and this is the great problem of the man of wealth, — to find ways of dispensing his benefactions so that they shall express a true wisdom and a genuine good-will. It is a difficult but not an impossible task, and the man who works it out becomes the heir of many beatitudes. It is a great thing to have power, — such power as is concentrated in large wealth, — and to know what it is for and how to use it. What a happy man must he be who is able to turn the streams of his abundance into the channels of life; to give health to the sick, and comfort to the careworn; to send light into darkened homes; to clear the paths of opportunity before those who are hedged in by poverty

and ignorance, and lift up the beacon of hope before their eyes; to replenish the torch of the light-bearers and strengthen the hearts of those who are working to fill the earth with the beauty of the Lord. In all our communities we have such men and women, and their works will follow them. For generations to come the aged poor will dwell in comfort and peace because of them, and the little children of misfortune will find help and healing, and the widow and the fatherless will have their burdens lightened, and the dwellers in humble homes will rise up and call them blessed, and many, far away, walking in darkness, will be led into the light by the unseen hands of those who have finished their work and have gone to their reward. This surely, in the kingdom that we pray for, the kingdom that Jesus Christ came to bring, must be the true use of abundance; and those who have learned how to employ it in such ways know how to abound.

5. I can name but one more condition to be supplied by him who wishes to live the good and happy life in abundance, and that is more central and vital than all the rest. The one thing needful for him is the conscious presence of God in his life. The one fact for him to face is that there is no such thing as absolute ownership in this world; that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; that whether we acknowledge it or not we are his

trustees, and are bound to use what we have in the fulfillment of his purposes. To any man who is not an atheist, this conclusion is inevitable. And the first thing for any man to do who has large wealth in his hands is to put himself into right relations with that Silent Partner from whom all this abundance comes, and find out what his purposes are in regard to it. Nothing is right with him till this main question is settled. To have abundance in our hands and be using it, every day, for all sorts of purposes, with no consideration of Him to whom it all belongs, and to whom we must account for its use, would seem to be an impossible conception. As rational men and women, we cannot do that.

When we recognize this central fact, and bring our lives into harmony with it, our problem is solved. Whatever our possessions may be, if our deepest wish is to know God's will concerning them and to do it, it will be well with us. Even if we sometimes err in interpreting God's will, it is the purpose that consecrates the life.

> "'T is not what man does that exalts him, but what man would do."

And he who discerns the intent will see to it that even our mistakes are turned to good account in the working out of his great purposes.

See whither our thought has led us. We have found that to live well in opulence calls for essentially the same qualities of mind and heart that are

required to live well in poverty. In either condition a man must be a man, — the master and not the slave of circumstance; in either condition he needs a well-trained mind, and a nature sensitive to the beauty of the world, and friendships that bring him stimulus and solace, and the enthusiasm of humanity, and the abiding sense of the presence of God in his life. And this we might have known beforehand, for it is the same Paul the apostle, whose words we are studying, who knows how to be abased and how to abound; and the essential qualities of character by which he meets these tests must be the same.

It is possible for men and women in these days to meet the same tests securely and triumphantly. We must never imagine that it is an easy thing to live the good and happy life in opulence; it is a very difficult vocation. "The Christian rich man," says Professor Peabody, "knows well that it is hard for him to enter the kingdom of God. He observes the characters of many men shrivel in the flames of prosperity. He sees that conditions of luxury, ease, and lack of the friction of life contribute to a slackening of moral fibre. He holds before himself, therefore, the solemn alternatives of Jesus — the mastery of wealth or the abandonment of it. Thus the wealth of the Christian rich man becomes a trust for the use of which he is to be scrupulously judged. He administers his affairs with watchful-

ness over himself, and with hands clean of malice, oppression, or deceit. He does not hope to atone for evil ways of making money by ostentatious benevolence in spending it. . . . His business is a part of his religion, and his philanthropy is a part of his business. He leads his life, he is not led by it. His five talents produce other five. And who is the Christian rich woman? It is she who finds it not impossible to be rich in purse and poor in spirit. She accepts her opportunity watchfully. She knows herself a servant of whom much is required. In the midst of a world of foolishness she maintains simplicity and good sense. She is equally at home among the rich and the poor. No severer test of the Christian life than this can be proposed for any woman, and no fairer type of character is to be met than that which issues from such a test, having passed through the needle's eye. If Jesus Christ should come again, he would know what it has cost a man to put under his foot the lust of riches, or a woman to keep her heart clean from the temptations of self-indulgence. Into the homes of such men and women, however splendid their homes may be, Jesus would enter gladly, as he entered the home of Zacchæus or that of Martha and Mary."[1]

How many of those who listen to me will be called to meet the test of increasing possessions, I cannot say. To some of you it is already a practical

[1] *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 223.

question, and to others it may yet be. I would not dare to pray that any of you may become rich; but this, with all my heart, I do desire for all of you, that whether you are rich or poor you may be able to live the good and happy life.

VII

THE CHRISTIAN LAW OF LIFE[1]

Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. — LUKE xvii. 33.

To formal logic this statement is absurd. "How," demands the scientific reasoner, "can it be affirmed that gain is loss and that loss is gain? You might as well say that east is west, or that down is up, or that something is nothing. The statement violates the principle of contradiction — that which Sir William Hamilton declares to be the highest of all logical laws, the supreme law of thought." True; and by those who suppose that the only logic is formal logic, and that all our reasoning about morality must be conformed to that which serves us in the sciences of quantity, the objection will be considered valid. If the methods and maxims which we employ in dealing with things abstract and inanimate are applicable when we are dealing with life and character, then this statement is perfectly absurd.

It is evident that the tendency of thought, in many intellectual circles, is to carry these methods and maxims of formal logic up into the higher

[1] Baccalaureate Sermon at Williams College, June, 1893.

realms of experience, and to insist that all knowledge in these higher realms must be submitted to their measurements. The extension of physical law into the spiritual world; the attempt to unify all knowledge by forcing the facts of the moral order into the categories of causation — this is one of the striking phenomena of the present age. Some devout men have joined in this movement, and, in their zeal to bring about a reconciliation between religion and science, have made concessions which are equally fatal to science and religion. The prevalent skepticism has arisen mainly out of the attempt to explain spiritual facts by physical laws. They cannot be so explained. The principle of friendship cannot be found in physics or chemistry; nor can it be deduced, by any process of reasoning, from any physical phenomena. The sentiment of honor cannot be accounted for by any quantitative analysis; the impulse of patriotism cannot be derived by the most exact calculus from the tables of the United States census. The law of the conservation of energy is supposed to cover all the operations of nature; but faith and hope and love can no more be brought under its formula than knowledge can be weighed in the scales of an apothecary. As soon as we pass from the inorganic world, we find these maxims failing us.

Take this law or principle of contradiction — that a thing cannot be and not be at the same time

and in the same sense. As applied to existences purely inorganic, or to mere abstract generalizations, this is true; but on the very threshold of the kingdoms of life this masterful law halts, and cannot enter. To nothing which lives and grows can any such dictum be applied. Every living thing is also a dying thing. It lives by dying. "As dying and behold we live" is not merely an emotional paradox, it is the biological formula; it is the utterance of every creature that possesses life. Listen to these impressive sentences: "The animal body dies daily, in the sense that at every moment some part of its substance is suffering decay, is undergoing combustion. This breaking down of complex substances, this continued partial decay, is indeed the source of the body's energy; each act of life is the offspring of an act of death. Each strain of a muscle, every throb of the heart, . . . every throw of the vital shuttle, means an escape of energy." This is not, as you might suppose, an extract from some commentary on one of St. Paul's epistles; it is a quotation from one of the latest scientific treatises upon physiology.[1] In the face of statements like these, it begins to look as if the principle of contradiction or non-contradiction was somewhat difficult of application when you come into the field where life is at work, where the forces of development are at play. "The notion of development,"

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xix. p. 9.

says Principal Caird, "is one which cannot be apprehended merely by affirmation, or by a series of affirmations, but only by a process which includes affirmation and negation, or, more precisely, perpetual affirmation, perpetual negation, solved in reaffirmation. At no moment of its progressive existence is it possible to determine a living organism as merely that which is, or to compass the idea of it by any number of positive predicates. . . . At every stage of its growth, and at every minutest portion of that stage, the organism not only is, but is passing away from that which it is."[1]

It may be, after all, that these words of the Christ, that we save our lives only by losing them, are not the mere hyperbole of a rhetorician. Let us see whether we can find any further confirmation of this law.

The life-history of everything that lives is, as we have seen, a commentary on Christ's words; so also do we find them confirmed in the relation which the parts of every organism bear to the organism. Interdependence is the law of every organized existence. No part of any organism lives by itself; it cannot be understood by itself; it has no meaning by itself; you cannot describe it or define it without mentioning the other parts of the organism to which it is vitally related. This is even true of those members of any living thing whose relations to it seem

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 219.

to be only mechanical. How will you define an arm? What use has it, what meaning has it, apart from the body to which it belongs? What is a stamen? Is it possible to form any idea of it except in its connection with the flower? Its definition is in its function; and you cannot describe its function without bringing in the whole life of the plant of which it is a member. How can you comprehend an organ without comprehending the organism? How can you separate, in thought, the heart or the lungs or the brain from the human body, and get by your analysis any adequate idea of heart or lungs or brain? You cannot think an organ without thinking the organism. Divide it in idea even from the rest of the organism, and you have destroyed the idea of it.

And as no part of an organism exists by itself, so neither does it exist for itself. The condition of its existence is not self-maintenance, but ministry. The heart does not work for itself. The lungs do not breathe for themselves. The moment any organ should set up for itself, isolating itself from the rest of the body, that moment its own supplies would be cut off and it would cease to be. It lives by what it gives to the other members and by what it receives from them. If it should seek to gain an independent existence it would lose its life at once; it is only by merging its life in the life of the body that it preserves its life.

What, therefore, is true of the organism as a whole is true of every part or member of it; it has no separate existence; individuation would mean death, and self-dependence would be self-destruction; it is by losing its life that it preserves its life.

Let us take this principle into a higher realm, and test it by applying it to the life of thought, the life of the mind. Not less true is it here that any attempt on the part of the thinker to isolate his thought would result in the paralysis of his thinking powers. We talk of independent thought; we praise the independent thinker; doubtless these phrases must have some significance, but how much do they signify? Every thinker ought to be to such a degree independent that he shall be unwilling to accept the conclusions of others if it is possible for him to verify them by his own investigations. No man ought to be a mere lazy pensioner on the labor of other investigators. But there are those who seem to imagine that intellectual independence requires them to think nothing that other men have thought and to believe nothing that other men believe, — to have a snug little intellectual world of their own and live in it. Thus we have men who evolve from their own consciousness their theories of all things visible and invisible, and stamp on these pet notions of theirs their own individuality, and appear to take great pride in the mental fabri-

cations which they have thus excogitated. A good many men have thus their own private interpretation of the universe, and of course they have no use for anybody else's interpretation. John Doe has his own theory of the solar system, of the constitution of matter, of the nature of virtue ; and the beauty of this theory, in John Doe's eyes, is that it is his own personal property, his *proprium ;* he has put his own trade-mark on it; it represents his work as an independent thinker. It must be confessed that a type of mind which resembles this is not uncommon, yet it may be doubted whether its products are very valuable. An apostle has told us that private interpretations of Scripture are not of much account, — that the view which commends itself to the judgment of only one man is not, probably, an important view. And it is equally doubtful whether a theory of the universe or of any portion of it which is confined to the apprehension of any one mind is of much consequence. Truth about the universe ought to be truth universal, one would say. It is only the truth which is universally true, which is true for every rational mind, that is of highest import. Most of us have our own small mental singularities and idiosyncrasies and pet notions and whims and crotchets; but mental progress consists in parting with these, and in substituting for them universal ideas, — truths that are not peculiar to our minds, that are just as true

for every other rational being as they are for us. John Doe cannot afford to keep his own pet theory of the solar system; he becomes a philosopher by abandoning that and getting possession of a theory which every one of his neighbors must accept as soon as the terms in which it is stated are explained to him. Those portions of my knowledge which are peculiar to myself, which no one can share with me, are of doubtful utility; let me make haste to get rid of this esoteric knowledge, and to replace it by knowledge that is not mine at all, by truths of which it is impossible for me to gain a copyright, by ideas which are the birthright of all sane minds.

Let us see if the principle of the text is not also fundamental in ethical science. How shall we formulate the law of duty? Is duty an individualistic conception? Can I solve the problem of duty by studying myself as an individual and neglecting all thought of my fellow men? No! I can no more isolate myself in finding duty than I can isolate myself in seeking truth. The moral law is no more a matter of private interpretation than is the law of gravitation. When I undertake to make my moral sense, my moral judgment, the criterion of right, I make myself as absurd as when I undertake to make my knowledge — be the same more or less — the measure and standard of all truth. Not only is duty for me a very complex thing, growing out of multifarious relations to all my fellows, and incapa-

ble of comprehension except in full view of these relations, but it belongs to the essence of moral obligation that it is universal. Kant's law clearly expresses it: "Act so that the maxim of thy will can be at the same time accepted as the principle of a universal legislation." You cannot deal with moral questions at all — you have no conception of what morality signifies — till you free yourself from all personal piques and resentments and preferences and cravings, and are ready to put yourself in the places of all those with whom you hold, or may hold, any relations whatever, and to choose their welfare as you choose your own. The first principle of morality requires that you abandon the point of view of the individual and look at all questions from the point of view of the universal welfare.

These illustrations will, I trust, have made it plain that the maxim which we are studying is not a mere rhetorical paradox; that it is the exact statement of one of the deepest laws of life; that the principle which it embodies is one that no sane man can afford to neglect. The Christian law of conduct cannot, indeed, as we have seen, be assimilated to the sciences of quantity; when the methods of reasoning which are employed in those sciences are carried up into the spiritual realm the result is mental petrifaction and moral putrefaction; but as we ascend into the kingdom of life, some glimpses appear of those higher principles by which the

conduct of spiritual beings must be ruled. Here we seem to find a movement from another quarter — spiritual law coming down upon the natural world; communion replacing competition; it is no longer a pure individualism; the law of each for all and all for each begins to find expression. And while we can never reach, by any of these biological analogies, the complete statement of the spiritual laws, we find ourselves steadily drawing toward them, as we traverse the kingdoms of life. In the very lowest of these kingdoms, as Mr. Spencer has been good enough to point out, we find the adumbration of self-sacrifice in those species which multiply by fission — the parent giving up a portion of its own life that the child may live. And with every step that we rise, the signs become clearer of a kingdom of heaven coming down upon the earth — of the steady retreat of the law of a carnal commandment before the power of an endless life.

By all these paths ascending to the superior realms of life, we are ready, when we reach them, for that clear statement of the highest law, given by the Prince of Life himself, in the words that we are studying.

The Christian law of life has not, however, I fear, been generally believed by Christians themselves to be a practicable rule. Those maxims into which Christ condenses the legislation of the kingdom of heaven have been regarded as presenting distant

ideals toward which, no doubt, we are bound to strive, but to which, in the present state of society, any close approximation would savor of fanaticism. Actually to love our neighbors as ourselves, to do to others as we could wish them to do to us, to prefer one another in honor, to act on the principle that it is more blessed to give than to receive — all this, we have been wont to think, is visionary and impossible. This is doubtless the law of the heavenly life, we say, but any attempt to follow it here upon the earth would be fraught with all manner of disasters. It is possible that in some secluded corners of human society — in the family, perhaps, — to some small extent, it may be, in the church, — we may look for obedience to these Christian precepts. Even in the church, however, we have thought it quite unsafe to depend upon Christian principles; we sell our church pews, for the most part, in the dearest market, giving to the longest purse the highest seat in the synagogue; and in our sectarian competitions we frankly recognize the principle of the survival of the strongest. In the great service of the state, and in the broad realms of industry and commerce, there has been no more room for the Christian law than there was for Christ himself at his advent in Bethlehem.

"The form which the infidelity of England, especially, has taken," wrote John Ruskin, thirty years ago, "is one unheard of in human history. No

nation ever before declared boldly, by print and word of mouth, that its religion was good for show, but 'would not work.' Over and over again has it happened that nations denied their gods, but they denied them bravely. The Greeks, in their decline, jeered at their religion and frittered it away in flatteries and fine arts; the French refused theirs fiercely, tore down their altars, and brake their carven images. The question about God with both these nations was still, even in their decline, fairly put, though falsely answered: 'Either there is or is not a Supreme Ruler; we consider of it, declare there is not, and proceed accordingly.' But we English have put the matter in an entirely new light: 'There is a Supreme Ruler, no question of it, only he cannot rule. His orders won't work. He will be quite satisfied with euphonious and respectful repetition of them. Execution would be too dangerous under existing circumstances, which he certainly never contemplated.'

"I had no conception of the absolute darkness which has covered the national mind in this respect until I began to come into collision with persons engaged in the study of economical and political questions. The entire *naïveté* and undisturbed imbecility with which I found them declare that the laws of the devil were the only practicable ones, and that the laws of God were merely a form of poetical language, passed all that I had ever before

heard or read of mortal infidelity. I knew the fool had often said in his heart there was *no* God, but to hear him say clearly out with his lips, 'There is a foolish God,' was something which my art studies had not prepared me for. . . .

"Co-relative with the assertion 'There is a foolish God' is the assertion 'There is a brutish man.' As no laws but those of the devil are practicable in this world, so no impulses but those of the brute (says the modern philosopher) are appealable to in the world. Faith, generosity, honesty, zeal, and self-sacrifice are poetical phrases. None of these things can, in reality, be counted upon; there is no truth in man which can be used as a moving or productive power. All motive force in him is essentially brutish, covetous, or contentious. His power is only power of prey; otherwise than the spider he cannot design; otherwise than the tiger he cannot feed. This is the modern interpretation of that embarrassing article of the Creed, 'the communion of saints.'"[1]

Bitter words are these, terrible words, but it is their sincerity that makes them pungent, and their truth that makes them terrible. They are not so true of England to-day as they were thirty years ago, thanks to the faithful witnessing of men like John Ruskin. Some dim apprehension that the Christian morality may be true seems to be dawning

[1] *Modern Painters*, vol. v. part ix. chap. xii.

upon the mind of that great nation. Can we say as much for our own country? Hardly yet, I fear. Churches, here and there, are timidly venturing to cast off the competitive methods, and to trust in the consecrated purpose of their parishioners for their maintenance; and there are signs in the industrial realm of a disposition to modify the harsh rule of supply and demand by the principle of goodwill; yet, for the most part, it is held, by the members of churches as stoutly as by outsiders, that the only rule that will work is not the Golden Rule, but "the good old rule" of Rob Roy, —

> "the simple plan
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

It must be admitted that there are some reasons for doubting whether *this* rule is working perfectly. The condition of the social and political world is not all that could be desired. In the midst of an increase in the productive energies of the nation that is almost miraculous, and a multiplication of wealth that is phenomenal, there is a great deal of hard and hopeless poverty. That it is positively increasing I do not say; I only say that there is far more of it than there ought to be in a country as rich as ours. Neither do I assert that this poverty is all due to social maladjustments; its causes are many; but every man who comes in contact with the lower stratum of society knows

that there is always a great multitude of honest and willing workers vainly asking for work to earn their daily bread, or laboring for wages that will barely keep them in existence. No man can be familiar with Darkest London or Darkest New York, or the destitute districts of any of our great cities, without feeling that the inequalities of our civilization are intolerable.

Whatever may be said, however, about the economic aspects of this problem, it will not be denied that the moral aspects are serious. It may be maintained that the poor have no reasons for complaint; it is certain that the poor do not think so. Social discontent is increasing; the gulf which divides the employed from the employing classes steadily widens; the tempers which are engendered by strikes and lockouts are fierce and implacable. How shall we account for these alienations and antipathies, this steady growth of unsocial feelings? Shall we lay it all to the unreason and depravity of the working classes? I do not think that this would be a rational explanation. If for the last fifty years social classes which ought to be in friendliest coöperation have been steadily drawing apart; if those who organize work and those who perform it are becoming more and more antipathetic; if, thus, the very stability of society is threatened by outbreaks of enmity, the explanation must be that there is something radically wrong in

the social organization. Whatever gains of social wealth may be credited to the competitive régime, its fruits in the realm of character have been bitter fruits. Shall we say that a system is working well which fills the storehouses of the land with wealth and the hearts of the people with hatred for one another? Might it not be better for the nation to have a little less luxury and a little more good-will?

And if our keen individualism has failed to bring forth order and peace in its industrial world, much more serious has its failure been in the political world. Into politics the principle of private interest has been intruding more and more during the last half century. There are still men who serve the state for patriotic reasons; but that statement will be thought in many circles incredible, almost absurd. The possession and the hope of office, with its rewards, are now popularly regarded as the only adequate motives to public service. It is generally assumed that political parties can be held together by no other bond than the cohesive power of public plunder. Under the tuition of this principle how are our politics faring? I will not attempt to answer that question; I will only call attention to one frightful fact which no man can gainsay — that the number of people in this country who will not vote unless they are paid for voting is rapidly increasing, so that each of the great political parties

finds it necessary to raise enormous sums of money on the eve of every election for the wholesale bribery of voters. That is only one ghastly symptom of a state of affairs in which thoughtful Americans find very little comfort. It must be admitted that the individualistic principle is not working very well in our political affairs.

Does it not begin to dawn upon some of the wise leaders of business and politics that something is out of joint in the social structure? Is it not about time to begin to inquire whether the laws of the devil are the only practicable laws? whether the maxim, Every man for himself, and so forth, is the true regulative principle of all human affairs, outside of the home and the church? We have kept saying, lo, these many years, that Christ's law would not work in practical life. Certain it is that the law of the kingdom which he came to overthrow does not work very well. Might it not be worth while to try the law so long discarded?

Oh, it is pitiful, pitiful, that one must stand here, at the end of the nineteenth century of our Lord, and plead with the people who bear his name that he is not a foolish ruler, a quixotic leader; that his word is the illuminating word; that his way is the living way; that it is safe to trust him and to follow him; to trust him not only for the life which is to come, but for the life that now is; to believe that he is able to lead and rule, not only in the

armies of heaven, but among the inhabitants of earth. Too long have we been willing to put that kingdom which he came to found away beyond the stars; to interpret all his glowing words about it as the description of some visionary state which has no relation to this world. That was not the purpose of his mission; that is not the meaning of his gospel. Recall the words of that prayer which he taught his disciples; surely that must embody all that is essential in his doctrine: and there is not one word in that which signifies that you and I are ever to live in any other world than this. There is no intimation of a wish that we may go to heaven; it is a prayer whose sole burden is that heaven may be brought to earth. That is the great meaning of the Master — always his first meaning. It is not to some unknown commonwealth that his counsels and commands apply, but to this world in which we live. If his laws have jurisdiction anywhere, they have jurisdiction now and here, in street and market, in factory and counting-room.

The real meaning of this gospel is beginning to appear even to minds which have not been in sympathy with its teachings. Thus, John Fiske, rising from the contemplation of the fact that humanity is gradually throwing off the brute inheritance — passing out of that primitive social state "in which he was little better than a brute toward an ultimate social state in which his character shall have

been so transformed that nothing of the brute can be detected in it," cries out: "When have we ever before held such a clue to the meaning of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount — 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth'? In the cruel strife of centuries has it not often seemed as if the earth were to be rather the prize of the hardest heart and the strongest fist? To many men these words of Christ have been as foolishness and a stumbling-block, and the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount have been openly derided as too good for this world." [1] Yea, verily; and now it is an evolutionist who stands up in the assemblies of a half-believing church and points out to them that the kingdom for which they have been praying so long, but whose advent they have put far away into some distant millennium, is nigh, even at the doors.

"Truly," answers one genuine prophet of this generation, — "truly, the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. . . . While the Christian theorist insists that human selfishness is ineradicable, the movement of an unregenerate society is tending to a point where altruism will be accepted as a scientific necessity. Men have already so far comprehended the divine teachings of nature as to know that there is no individual health except through the health of the community. They find also, now that

[1] *The Destiny of Man*, p. 105.

they undertake vast industrial and commercial enterprises, that, having called so largely upon nature's vitalities, they are confronting also her larger spiritual meanings, unheeded hitherto ; and that their vast and complex machinery, with its accelerations through steam and electricity, will not work without incalculable waste, friction, and uncertainty as to its beneficent result to any one concerned in its management, *except through a human fellowship in its control as universal as nature's own coöperation therewith.* Thus the children of this world, keeping close to natural uses, stand face to face with vitalities whose laws point to Christ, and compel them at least to assume that selfishness is impracticable. Shall not the Christian accept the reality when worldly science cannot evade the similitude ? " [1]

To the young men before me,[2] let me especially commend this truth. Some of you are already the pledged disciples of the Master whose word we have been studying. I trust that this discussion may have helped you to see that in choosing him as your Master you have made no mistake ; that his word is indeed the sure word ; that his way is the only way. Is not this clear to all of you ? Are there not good reasons for believing that this Galilean peasant, who nineteen centuries ago so clearly laid down

[1] *God in his World*, p. xxxvii.

[2] Williams College, June, 1893.

the law of the soul and of society, is the very Messiah of God — Leader and Lawgiver and Captain and King of men? What nobler standard can you find, what better leadership can you follow, than that of Jesus of Nazareth? And this law of his, that you save your life by losing it, — has it not been made plain to you that it is the law of life? Is it hard for a brave and chivalrous young man to catch the spirit of this law? Does it not at once come home to him that self-surrender to a lofty ideal is the truest self-mastery; that he who loses himself in enthusiastic devotion to the highest good he knows, most surely finds himself? Cling fast to this conviction, I beseech you; let it not go; keep it, for it is your life. It is not by what you try to get out of the world that your life will be enriched; it is by what you give to the world. Join yourselves not with those who seek to levy tribute upon the earnings of thousands, but rather with those who study to lift the burdens and brighten the lives of their fellow men. I believe that the world is readier today than ever before to recognize and welcome a heroic Christliness. I believe that wonders can be wrought in the industrial realm by men who will put the spirit of Christ into the organization of industry. I believe that great victories for purity and decency can be won in any community by a faithful few who will throw themselves into the political arena with the same motive that sends a

missionary to Africa or a soldier into the slender ranks of the forlorn hope. Great work is waiting for you, young men; I hope that you are getting ready for it. I hope that you will find it and do it with your might.

May God guide you into his own right way, and gird you with his might, and clothe you with his beauty, and fill you with his peace, so that round about you, wherever you shall stand, there shall be clear spaces for thought and work, so that out of your lives a virtue shall issue which shall enrich the poor, and comfort the sorrowful, and make the burden-bearer strong; so that, losing your lives in Christly service, you shall keep them unto life eternal.

VIII

FREE FROM THE LAW

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law. — Rom. iii. 19.

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. — Rom. vi. 14.

A SHARP distinction is here drawn between the condition of those who are under the law and of those who are not. Whatever may be the apostle's conception of the law, it would appear, from these texts, and from others of the same tenor, that there are two classes of men, one of which is under the dominion of the law and the other of which is free from the law. And from some of these texts, taken out of their connection and interpreted with verbal narrowness, the doctrine has been drawn that Christian believers are not under law; that no moral obligation rests on them; that they are free to do what they will. This Antinomianism, as it is called, has infested the church in all ages; several of the epistles attack it; the Gnostic sects in the early centuries taught it. Luther had a hard fight with it, in the person of Agricola; and in the days of the English protectorate it had great vogue in England, so that the Westminster Assembly of Divines was

obliged to testify against it. The doctrine is an exaggeration of the gospel, as contrasted with the law. If Christ delivers us from the condemnation of the law, men said, then the law has nothing more to do with us; in our behalf it is abolished; Christ has suffered its penalty for us; its claims are therefore canceled, and we are free from its bondage. The conduct of believers was therefore supposed to be a matter of no consequence; they were not saved by their own good works; they were saved by faith in Christ; good works were the beggarly elements from which they were delivered; there was merit enough in the sacrifice of Christ to cover any amount of transgression.

It is evident that men were carrying the doctrines of grace to this absurd extreme in Paul's day, for he protests vehemently against this conclusion. "What then?" he cries; "shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid." There have been phases of theology in our own time which have come perilously near to this notion. That good Orthodox woman who said that of course Unitarians *had* to be better than the Orthodox because they had n't any atonement to believe in, had got the idea. The belief has not been at all uncommon that by the acceptance of Christ as a substitute, one was freed, to a considerable extent, if not wholly, from the power of the law. There is a hymn which conveys,

doubtless, to the minds of many who sing it, this idea: —

> "Free from the law, oh, happy condition!
> Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
> Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
> Grace hath redeemed us, *once for all.*"

So far as this suggests the abrogation of law, it arises from an utterly unspiritual conception of law, from a purely quantitative notion of morality and its sanctions; from a theology which borrows its ruling ideas from mechanics or from commerce, and has no understanding of the real forces which are at work in the realm of character.

Paul uses the word law in various senses; it is only by uniting and comparing many passages that we get at his meaning. I will not enter into this textual elucidation; let it suffice to say that the foundation of the moral law is laid in the order of nature, in the constitution of man. Paul tells us in this epistle that when Gentiles who have no law — no written law — do by nature the things of the law, "these, having no law, are a law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them." That is where the law is primarily written, in the nature of things and in the nature of man. This means simply that things are so made and that man is so made that right

conduct brings health and life and happiness to the obedient while wrong conduct brings to the disobedient disease and disorder and death, physical and moral.

What is right conduct? It is conduct that tends to the perfection of being; conduct whose result will be to make us the men and women that we are meant to be. Right conduct is conduct which falls in with that "stream of tendency by which all things fulfill the law of their being;" wrong conduct evades or resists that tendency. Sin is lawlessness, the apostle says. It is the transgression of the organic law of the nature. It is acting contrary to nature, to the real nature, which God has impressed upon the soul. It brings, therefore, as its natural and inevitable consequence, weakness, disorder, suffering, death. Every violation of the soul's law is followed by such consequences. The moral constitution is under law in the same way that the physical constitution is. If you transgress the laws of health, if you eat unwholesome food, if you breathe bad air, if you sit in a cramped position, if you overstrain nerves or muscles, you suffer the consequences of this transgression. In exactly the same way, if you act selfishly or deceitfully, or cruelly or dishonorably, the consequences immediately and inevitably follow; your moral nature is weakened and disordered; your personality is degraded.

Such is what we may call the natural moral law, — the law which is impressed upon the nature of man, and rules inflexibly all his conduct.

But, parallel with this law of nature, there is an ideal morality, which reveals itself in our thought and feeling, of which what we call conscience is the witness. Something outside of us and above us is always saying to us, "You must do right. The way of righteousness is the way of life; the way of disobedience is the way of death." Something within us consents to that law that it is good. There is a feeling of obligation to do that which we believe to be right. To our choice alternatives are constantly presented; there is a higher and a lower, a better and a worse; a way that leads to life and a way that leads to death. In multitudinous forms this choice is always before us; every day and every hour we may take the higher or the lower good; the path that conducts to integrity and manhood or the path that goes toward moral enfeeblement and degradation. And we know, all the while, that we ought to choose the higher instead of the lower. Our judgment may sometimes be at fault; the thing which seems best to us may not infallibly be the best; but our conscience never fails to tell us that we ought to do the thing which seems to us right. When we do that conscience approves, and its approval gives us strength and peace. When we fail to do that conscience dis-

approves, and its disapproval causes remorse and feebleness of will and a sense of degradation. The deepest thing in us is this sense of right and wrong; this feeling of obligation to do the right and shun the wrong, to choose the good and refuse the evil.

Such, then, is the law, the moral law, which governs our lives. It has this twofold character; it is incorporated into our natures, and goes on working out its consequences there: it is revealed in our consciences as the moral ideal, which bids us choose the higher good and fills us with a sense of guilt and shame when we fail to choose it.

Are there any of us who are now, or who ever were or ever will be free from the moral law, in either of these aspects? Are there any of us who are released from the obligation to do right? Are there any of us who are not bound to choose the higher good instead of the lower; the better instead of the worse; the way of life instead of the way of death? Is the responsibility to obey the ideal of conduct relaxed or remitted for any of us? Is there one of us who can do the thing which he believes to be right and honorable and beautiful and not have a feeling of satisfaction and self-approval because of his obedience? Is there one of us who can do the thing which he believes to be mean and weak and unworthy and not have a sense of guilt and shame and humiliation?

Considering the law on the other side as working

itself out in our nature, — are any of us free from that or can we ever be? Is there any one here who imagines that he can violate the law of his soul with impunity ; that he can be selfish or brutal or false or foul and not suffer instantly and inevitably the reaction of that disobedience upon his own moral nature?

No; this law, in both these aspects, is forever binding upon every moral being. There is not a saint on earth or an angel in heaven in behalf of whom it is even for one instant remitted or relaxed. There is not a saint on earth or an angel in heaven who is not and will not forever be under the obligation to do right; who is not to blame if he does wrong, and who does not know it; who is not promptly and instantly rewarded if he does right and punished if he does wrong. The law which brings peace and health and strength and life to the right doer, and remorse and weakness and death to the wrong-doer, is never, for one instant, in any world, set aside or suspended in its operation, any more than the law of gravitation is set aside or the laws of chemical reaction are suspended. You can never get out from under that law until you get out of God's universe.

What, then, does Paul mean, when he says that the Christians to whom he is writing are not under the law?

He does not mean that the natural moral law,

the operation of moral cause and consequence, is ever repealed or suspended. He is speaking rather of the relation of the soul to the ideal rule of right, the law of the mind, — disobedience to which brings down upon us the sense of guilt and shame.

When a man tramples his own ideals under foot he blames himself, and he cannot help feeling that the Unseen Power above him, which lifts up this ideal before him and bids him obey it, also blames him. He is false to his own better nature; he is disobedient to the heavenly vision in which, as he very well knows, is the master light of all his seeing. He is under condemnation. That is a burden which every one of you has borne. You have done, more than once, what your better self disapproved. A higher and a lower path were open before your feet and you chose the lower. You stifled your own sense of honor or justice in yielding to the dictates of appetite or passion or selfishness or cowardice. Therefore you disapproved of yourself. You blamed yourself. And you knew that God must also blame you.

Now the first thing for you to understand is that this feeling of guilt and blameworthiness is a sound and true feeling. What conscience is telling you is the everlasting truth, and you must not deny or belittle it. The sense of guilt is just as natural a feeling as is the smart of a burn. Christian Science may tell you that the burn does not smart, but you

know better. A false philosophy of life may tell you that you need not be ashamed of yourself when you have done a base or a mean thing, but you know better. There is a good deal of this kind of philosophy in the air nowadays, and nothing can be more pestilent. You are sometimes told that nobody needs to blame himself when he has done wrong; that it was probably an error; that circumstances were responsible for it; that he probably did the best he could at that moment. All such teaching is deadly. It saps the very foundations of character. It obliterates the primal distinctions of morality. It gives the lie to the whole testimony of human consciousness, since the world began. Was David a victim of self-delusion when he cried: "I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me?" Was Judas mistaken when he flung down the thirty pieces of silver saying, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood?"

Putting aside the Bible, what is the witness of all the great literature, ancient and modern? Is that grim tale of Dante's a meaningless symbol? Are Shakespeare's pictures of remorse in "Macbeth" a false interpretation of life? Was Richard III. merely a superstitious dreamer when he awoke on that night of agony, in which his misdeeds had been filing in procession past his couch, and cried: —

"O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? Myself? there 's none else by.
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O no! Alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself!
I am a villain: yet, I lie, I am not.
Fool! of thyself speak well; fool! do not flatter!
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.
Perjury, perjury in the highest degree,
Murder, stern murder in the direst degree,
All several sins, all used in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all, Guilty! guilty!
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me,
And if I die no soul shall pity me.
Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself?"

Is Robert Browning ignorant of the true facts of human nature when he pictures the old man Martin Relph, remembering a deed of his youth, that may have been weakness or may have been jealousy, and beating his own head with his fist while he cries: —

"If I last as long as Methuselah I shall never forgive myself;
But — God forgive me, that I pray, unhappy Martin Relph!
As coward, coward I call him, — him, yes, him! Away from me!
Get you behind the man I am now, you man that I used to be!"

This sense of guilt for sins and faults and meannesses is the last thing any man can afford to ignore or explain away. The first step toward manhood is to face it, and own it, in all sincere humility and contrition. That brings a man under the law, and he feels the weight of its condemnation resting on him. That is the natural, wholesome, right reaction of sin in the consciousness of the sinner.

But he cannot remain in that condition. The load will crush him, if he cannot be relieved of it. For many and many of us the memory of past sins is a discouragement and an impediment; it clogs our feet and unnerves our purpose when we try to turn to better ways. We are under the law, in very deed. It has got us down, and it taunts us with our misdeeds and failures. Is there any way to get rid of that feeling of condemnation? It is just here that we must have help, and it is just here that the Gospel brings us the help we need. What it undertakes to do for a man is to get him out from under this load. How does it do it?

Does it tell him that God does not care about his sin — does not disapprove it — and therefore he need not? No; it does not tell him any such thing; if it did he would know that it was lying. He knows that the Infinite Purity cannot but disapprove his sin. He knows that the apostle's reasoning is sound: "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."

What the Gospel tells him is that God does disapprove his sin; nay, that his sin, which causes pain to him, causes God a still deeper pain. It makes that plain to him in the life of Jesus Christ, whose perfect manhood is the perfect revelation of divinity. The attitude of Jesus Christ toward sin represents the Father's feeling. And we know that the sin of the world laid a heavy burden on the heart of Jesus; that the selfishness and meanness and malice of men made him the Man of Sorrows, wrung from him the bloody sweat of Gethsemane.

And yet we know that deeply as he disapproved the sins of men he did not despise them nor despair of them, but loved them in spite of all, and believed in them, — in the worst of them, and labored and suffered to help them and save them. And he tells us that in all this he is one with the Father; that the very meaning of his life is to show us the Father; that like as he is wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, through his identification with us, so the Father in heaven, while grieving over our sins, loves us and longs to help us.

This is the Father's forgivingness, which Jesus manifests and illustrates. It does not mean the repeal of the moral law or any suspension of its action; it has to do with the personal feeling of God toward men who have sinned. "What is forgiveness?" asks Dr. W. N. Clarke; and answers

thus: "To forgive is to say to one who has done wrong (and to have it true), 'I do not think of you or feel toward you as one who has done this; I do not hold it in my heart against you; I leave it out of my thoughts, so that it does not embarrass the relation between you and me; it is between us as if it had not been.'"

This is the assurance which comes through Jesus Christ to sinning men. It makes us see and understand that the Infinite Purity is also the Infinite Compassion; that while the Father in heaven cannot approve our sin and does not wish that we should extenuate it, he loves us in spite of it, and is ready to pledge the infinite resources of his grace to help us overcome it. This is the assurance which brings hope and courage to the sinner. He feels that while such is the attitude of the Infinite Love toward him he has no right to be discouraged about himself or to despise himself; he is stirred up to make the fight against the evil and to overcome. Thus the sense of condemnation disappears, being submerged in the tides of the divine mercy. His trust in the forgiving love of God has made him free from the bondage of the law.

There is still another way in which the Gospel, when it is heartily received, makes us free from the bondage of the law. So long as any one is doing right merely or mainly from the sense of external

obligation, the law rests heavily upon him. Even when he obeys it, it lies on him like a yoke, and it often galls him. He does what he ought to do, but he finds small pleasure in it. He is under the law. Now it is far better to do right from a sense of duty than to do wrong in obedience to an impulse. But there is something far better than the action whose motive is a sense of external obligation. One may get into a state of mind in which he shall do right from the impulse of good-will or enthusiasm or affection, and not under the compulsion of law.

Employees are apt to find the strict rules irksome which require them to be on duty promptly at a given hour, and which hold them to a rigid performance of all their tasks. But suppose that some day the employer says to them: "You need not be hirelings, unless you choose; I shall be glad to make you partners, and a full share of the profits of the business may be yours." Then, immediately, if they are men of the right spirit, a new motive takes possession of them. Their motive is no longer the obligation of the rule, but the interest of the business; they are no longer under the law; they do the things which the law required for another reason and in another spirit.

The illustrations of this truth are so many and so familiar that I do not need to dwell upon them. The musician who has got beyond the slavery of technique, so that the spirit of the music takes

possession of his soul and utters itself freely, with no painful thought of the movement of the fingers; the writer who no longer needs to think about the laws of grammar or rhetoric but whose thoughts spontaneously find expression in good literary form; the gentleman who has obeyed the laws of good-breeding until they have become to him a second nature, and the artless and unstudied language of his life is courtesy, — all these give us some hint of what is meant by passing out from under the law. But there is something better than this. For love is the fulfilling of the moral law, and the law is never perfectly obeyed until a genuine affection takes possession of the soul. It would seem natural that when the great gospel of the divine mercy and forgivingness is brought home to the heart of a man, when he is made to understand that, in spite of his sin, God loves him and longs to help him, an answering love would spring up within him. How can he help responding to such kindness as this, with all the energy of his nature? What other wish or purpose can he have but that of yielding all his heart and soul and mind and strength to the loyal service of this Almighty Friend? And if that impulse takes possession of his heart, the law will no longer be to him a bond or a fetter or a goad. The things which the law requires will be the things that he will do spontaneously; the statutes of God will be songs in the house of his pilgrimage;

the drudgery of obedience will become the delight of loving service.

These, then, are the two ways in which the gospel of Christ, when we heartily receive it, brings us out from under the law. It banishes the depressing sense of condemnation which torments us on account of our past misdoing, and assures us of the love that casteth out fear: it inspires us with a great affection which makes the yoke easy and the burden light.

I wonder if any one is here to whom the memory of past misdeeds and failures is a heavy load, — whose sense of condemnation for the past is so deep and keen that he is discouraged and hopeless about the future. My friend, you probably know your New Testament well enough to recall the attitude of Jesus Christ toward the people who were furthest from the ways of righteousness. You know enough about him to be sure that if he were here, you could go to him, and tell him all about your bad past, and be sure of his sympathy and friendship. The purest, the truest, the noblest soul that ever lived on this planet would treat you in that way, if he were here. And he would tell you that his feeling toward you is the feeling of the Father in heaven. If you believe that, what right have you to let those old memories haunt you and shadow you and paralyze your will when you try to do right. What can you do but

"Drop your burden at his feet
And bear a song away?"

And I wonder if there are any disciples here who are still laboring on under the goad of conscience, driving themselves to duty, wearing the yoke of the law, and galled by it often. Oh that to some of you there might come to-day some revelation of the great Friendship, the patient, tender, gracious, forgiving, yearning, all-encompassing, never wearying love of God for you, for you! How much he has done for you! How much he has borne with you! How often your waywardness and thoughtlessness and selfishness have given him pain! Yet all the light and charm, all the beauty and grace, all the hope and happiness of your life, are his gift to you; and he is always waiting to fill your soul with his peace, and to crown your life with his loving-kindness. If some dim sense of this great love of the Lord and Giver of life could find its way into your heart, I think you would stop doing drudgery; you would find some other motive for service than the dry constraint of obligation. The law of love is the perfect law of liberty. It does not cancel obligation, but it transfigures it. "Whoso looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, the same being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, THIS MAN SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIS DOING."

IX

THE LESSON OF THE CROSS

Giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins. — Col. i. 12–15.

We hear, quite often, in these days, from the most earnest preachers of the evangelical churches, strong protests against the tendency to ignore the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The deepest truth of the gospel, they say, is contained in that doctrine of atonement; a theology which has no room in it for that central truth will have no power over the lives of men.

I think that the point is well taken. The truth which is made known to us in the sacrifice of Christ is the central truth of the gospel. Without it our doctrine is shorn of its power.

Certain it is that the apostles regarded it as the very burden of their message. It was not merely Christ the teacher or Christ the leader to whom they were pointing men; it was Christ who died for us upon the cross. "I preach Christ crucified," cried Paul. "To the Jews he is a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them that are

called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God." "God forbid that I should glory," he cries again, "save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And this has been the conviction of all the greatest preachers of all the generations. Even those known as Liberals have recognized the power which resides in the cross of Christ. It was a good Unitarian, Sir John Bowring, who wrote, following Paul: —

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

It was Samuel Longfellow, a brother of the better known poet, and a great Unitarian hymn writer, who reshaped Charles Wesley's words, and set his own seal to them, thus: —

"When my love to Christ grows weak,
When for deeper faith I seek,
Then in thought I go to thee,
Garden of Gethsemane.

"There I walk amid the shades,
While the lingering twilight fades,
See that suffering, friendless One,
Weeping, praying there, alone.

When my love for man grows weak,
When for stronger faith I seek,
Hill of Calvary! I go
To thy scenes of fear and woe;

"There behold his agony
Suffered on the bitter tree;
See his anguish, see his faith,
Love triumphant still in death."

It was Dr. Frederic Henry Hedge, one of the great philosophic teachers of Harvard University, and, perhaps, the greatest of the Unitarian theologians, who wrote: —

"It is finished! Man of sorrows!
From the cross our frailty borrows
Strength to bear and conquer thus!

"While extended there we view thee,
Mighty Sufferer, draw us to thee,
Sufferer victorious."

It would, indeed, be a strange travesty of the gospel of Christ which disregarded the significance of his death, or put little or no emphasis upon it. Can you conceive that Christianity would have had the conquering power over human hearts that it has shown itself to possess if Jesus had taught the same truth which we find in the gospels — (omitting, of course, his own references to his death) — and had lived the same life of service and beneficence which is there described, but had died in his bed — a natural death — of disease or old age? Would our Christianity be anything like what it has been if the story of the cross and the passion had not been its central theme? Any thoughtful

person would be able, after a very little reflection, to answer these questions.

The earnest evangelical preachers are right, then, in saying that there is a truth here which must not be neglected. But, after all, not one of these earnest evangelical preachers, if he is a really thoughtful and spiritually minded man, can teach to-day the same doctrine of Christ's death that was commonly taught fifty years ago. Sometimes, I fear, there is a little insincerity just here. There is a pretense of going back to the old doctrine, when the preacher knows that the old doctrine has ceased to be believable; and there is an adroit use of ambiguous phrases which seem to convey the old sense but can be used in a very different sense. It is not a subject concerning which we can afford to be insincere. Here, if anywhere, we must be simple and honest. And if we are, we shall say that the doctrine of the atonement, the theory of the atonement, has greatly changed during the past generation.

What we found to be true of the doctrine of sin has, however, been equally true of this doctrine of sacrifice. In getting rid of the errors with which the truth was overgrown, a good many of us have thrown away the essential truth itself. Explanations of the significance of Christ's death were offered us that shocked our moral sense and confounded our reason. We have rejected those explanations, and in doing so have, perhaps, rushed to the

illogical conclusion that there was nothing there to explain. That is a serious mistake. There is much to explain. There is the death to explain, and its relation to Christian experience in all the ages, and to the whole of human history. It means something. It means more than any other event that ever happened on this planet. Not to comprehend the truth which is revealed in the death of Jesus the Christ is to lack what is essential to a real Christian experience.

Let us say, then, that we are deeply interested to understand not merely the teachings of Jesus Christ, but also his sufferings. His teachings cannot be interpreted without understanding his sufferings. If you disregard his sufferings, how will you explain these words of his: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me?"

In his sufferings, we may say, "Christ does something for us, and something in us."

What is it that he does for us? We often say that he dies for us; but we cannot mean by this that he dies instead of us — as a victim enduring the death that we deserved. We cannot say this because it ascribes injustice to God. We cannot believe that God transfers to an innocent being the penalty that belongs to a guilty being. Christ does not suffer, as our substitute, the penalty of the law, because the very essence of the moral law is that

each man bears his own blame, and that substitution is impossible. Nor is it true that he dies to appease the wrath of God, or to endure suffering which God is willing to accept as the vindication of his law so that he may safely forgive the sinner.

All these judicial, legal, governmental explanations of the death of Christ are simply incredible; the unsophisticated moral sense is shocked by the suggestion of them; they have passed from human thought. Christ does, indeed, die for us; he dies in our behalf; his sufferings are endured in our interest and for our benefit. He dies for us just as he lives for us. This does not mean that he lives instead of us, so that we need not live; it means that he lives in such a way as to make his life serve us, minister to us, enrich us, inspire and ennoble us. In like manner his death is a great ministration to our deepest needs, — our need of knowledge and of virtue.

It reveals to us, first, something that we did not know, and that has never in any other way been so clearly revealed, concerning the nature and character of God. It reveals to us the fact that our God is a suffering God; that he is not merely just and pure and holy, but that he is capable of suffering with us and for us, on account of our sins and our griefs.

We may not be able fully to account for Jesus Christ, but the one thing which seems most sure about him is, that he represents or manifests God to

men. This is what he claims to do, and his claim is justified. We have learned from him that we are all sons of God; but we see that he is the Son of God in a more perfect sense than any of us; his character is the reflection of the divine character; he is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person; he is the most perfect revelation that the world has ever seen of divinity.

The character of Jesus therefore reflects for us the character of God; and when we see Jesus suffering on account of our sins, — bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows; when we know that he is wounded by our transgressions and bruised by our iniquities, then we rightly judge that the Father in heaven is pitiful and compassionate, that our sufferings burden his heart and that our sins grieve him.

Here is the lesson of the cross, — the one great lesson that the world has learned from the sacrifice of Christ — that infinite Power is infinite Pity: that the great Creator and Ruler is One who suffers with and for his children.

That truth could hardly have been gathered from those theories of the atonement with which we have been familiar. According to those theories the First Person in the Trinity was One whose function it was to inflict or impose suffering; he was One whose justice demanded suffering for his satisfaction. A part of the Godhead was pitiful, but another part was pitiless. The Son was ready to suffer and the Father

accepted the suffering of the Son as the equivalent of the suffering which he must otherwise have inflicted on disobedient men. In the light of these theories God was not a sufferer, — it was even denied with indignation that God could suffer; that was even deemed one of the most dangerous of heresies. Since he is a perfect being, men argued, he must be perfectly blessed; to ascribe to him grief or suffering is to impugn his perfection. Theology was never entirely consistent along this line; indeed the best things in theology have often been its inconsistencies. For it was certainly believed that the divine Christ was a sufferer, and it was also taught that his suffering was not wholly experienced by the human side of him; that his divine nature must also share in it. But of late the newer religious thinking has boldly affirmed that a divinity which could not suffer would be undivine — less divine, indeed, than our humanity. Dr. Fairbairn's orthodoxy can hardly be impugned, and we find him saying: "Theology has no falser idea than that of the impassibility of God. If he is capable of sorrow he is capable of suffering, and were he without the capacity for either he would be without any feeling of the evil of sin or the misery of man. *The very truth that comes by Jesus Christ may be said to be summed up in the passibility of God*," — God's ability to suffer.

The suffering Christ reveals and manifests the

suffering God. This is the very significance of the garden and the cross.

But what is the explanation of Christ's suffering? Why does he suffer? What is it that wrings from him in the garden the bloody sweat, — that fills his soul with the horror of great darkness as he hangs upon the cross?

Is it the dread or the experience of physical anguish? No: that is an unworthy explanation. That would be an accusation of weakness or cowardice. Many a man has faced death and torture in utter serenity of soul. It is not the fear of pain that made the cup so bitter which Jesus pressed to his lips in the hour of his passion.

Nor was it the sense of his Father's displeasure with him. No: let us not blaspheme! Can any one imagine that the man Christ Jesus, in the hour of his sublimest devotion to his Father's will was under his Father's frown; or that the infinite Goodness and Truth could feign an anger toward him which he did not feel? The crudities of interpretation have been many and fearful, but they have not sunk to any lower depth of unreason than when they twisted the outcry of agony upon the cross into the dogmatic statement that the Son on the cross suffered the Father's displeasure.

No; it was not the dread of physical pain, nor was it any sense of his Father's wrath, that filled the soul of the Christ when he said in the garden, "My

soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." It was his overpowering sense of the sin of the world. It was the view that he had in that dark hour of the selfishness, the malice, the treachery, the cruelty of human hearts. The men among whom he had lived, whom he had never wronged, whom he had always sought to comfort and to bless, to whom he had offered the most unselfish love that earth had ever seen, had spurned his love and were going to put him to death, simply because his truth rebuked their falsity, and his kindness convicted them of uncharity, and his purity shamed their uncleanness. These were the men whom he loved, whom he wanted to help and save. What a tragedy it was! The more he loved them, the more he must abhor the sin which had taken possession of their lives. And it was the struggle in his soul between his love for these men and his hatred of their sin, that made his soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death.

Some of us may have known something of this kind of agony. I have seen a father whose love for his son was deep and strong and constant, who had spent the best energies of his life in trying to confer the best gifts on his son, standing dumb and stricken in the presence of evidence of his son's treachery and perfidy. The boy for whom he had been ready to give his life was ready not only to rob his father, but to plunge the whole household

into grief and shame. What could such a father do? If he were the holiest, the wisest, the best of men, what would he do?

One thing he could not help doing. He must take upon his own soul the great burden of shame and sorrow that this sin had brought with it. Suffer he must, because he has the heart of a father. The deeper and the truer is his love for his son the more poignant must be his suffering. And it is not his own losses that chiefly distress him; it is his sense of the depravity which has been revealed in the character of his boy. That evil he hates with a perfect hatred, and the soul that hates the sin while it loves the sinner must be torn with a terrible suffering. "Mercy," says Dr. Abbott, "is hate pitying. It is the wrath of a great righteousness flowing out in a great compassion. It is the reconciliation of these two experiences, the experience that hates and the experience that pities; and because it hates will destroy iniquity, and because it pities will destroy iniquity. If we are ever to save our fellow men we must save them by this mercifulness which is a joint experience of a great hatred because of wrong and a great pity because of wrong. Both of these elements must be within us or we can make no step toward saving the wrongdoer. In Wagner's drama, Parsifal is besought by the wicked Kundry to accept her love and love her in return. 'No,' he says, 'I cannot and I will not.'

'Come down,' she says, 'for one hour to my love and take it and give your love in return;' and he answers, 'Were I to do it, it would be damnation both for you and for me.' There is no way he can save her except he retain the hatred for the iniquity in her; for if he sacrifices that he will not save her, he will only destroy himself. If he did not pity her, his wrath would destroy her; if he did not revolt from her his unwrathful pity would doom both him and her to a common destruction. For it is never possible for any one to save another unless he has in him both these elements."

So this great-hearted father, of whom we are speaking, must be relentless in his hatred of the sin which has brought his son to the brink of ruin. Love for the boy which was merely a good-natured fondness, which deplored the disgrace and trouble he had brought upon himself, but made light of the wrong which he had done, would never save him. He cannot be saved unless he can be made to hate and abhor his sin as his father hates and abhors it. The one thing needful for him is to see in a true light and to judge with a clear judgment his own base conduct. It will never do for him to ignore it, or belittle it, or think lightly of it. No: there must arise in his soul a mighty revulsion from it; he must set himself against it and put it out of his life. Therefore his father must not ignore it or belittle it or think lightly of it. The natural

suffering which it causes the father may have the effect to awaken in the mind of the son the proper feeling toward it. When he sees how it hurts his father, and knows that his father's pain is not any selfish feeling, but that it is wholly inspired by compassion for him, he may be aroused to some proper sense of his own conduct. That, at any rate, is the only motive that will reach him. The father's suffering may reveal to the son the father's love and his own sin, and may bring him to hate the sin as his father hates it, and to accept the love that seeks to save him from it. If that motive does not reach him and reclaim him, nothing will. The suffering of a righteous love — a love that will not compromise with sin, but that clings to the sinner — is the only power that is adequate to save from sin.

This was the love of Jesus Christ for men ; and since we believe that the character of Jesus Christ represents to us the character of God more clearly than that of any one who ever lived, we believe that this is God's love for men. This is the truth that is brought to light in the garden and on the cross. It is the greatest truth that was ever made known to men ; and I do not know where in history it has ever been clearly revealed except in the scenes of the garden and the cross.

This, then, is what Christ does for us in his suffering. He reveals to us the heart of God. It is of vast consequence that we should know both these

truths about God, — that he loves us with an infinite compassion; that he hates our sins with a perfect hatred.

"It is only by human experiences," says Dr. Abbott, "that we can interpret the divine. We are certainly not to think of God as one who is wrathful and who has to be appeased by some one outside of himself. We are certainly not to think of him as though he were an infinite and eternal Shylock who must have his pound of flesh, and is appeased only because there is at his side a more merciful Bassanio who will give the price and let Antonio go free. But neither are we to think of him as though good nature were synonymous with love, as though he were an indifferent and easy going God who cares more for the present happiness than the real character of his children; who says, 'You have done some wrong things, you have committed some faults, you have fallen into some errors, you have some stains upon you; but we will let it all pass; it is of no great consequence.' We shall never enter into the mystery of redemption unless we enter in some measure into these two experiences of wrath and pity, and into the mystery of their reconciliation. We must realize that God has an infinite and eternal loathing of sin. If the impure and unjust, the drunkard and the licentious, are loathsome to us, what must be the infinite loathing of an infinitely pure spirit for those who

are worldly and selfish, licentious and cruel, ambitious and animal. But with this great loathing is a great pity. And the pity conquers the loathing, appeases it, satisfies it, only as it redeems the sinner from his loathsomeness, lifts him up from his degradation, brings him to truth and purity, to love and righteousness; for only then is he or can he be brought to God."

In showing you what Christ does for us in his suffering, — what is the revelation that he makes to us of the divine character, — I have also clearly suggested what it is that he does in us. If he redeems us from our sin, it is by getting us to see our sin as God sees it, and to hate it as God hates it; in getting us to believe that God loves us in spite of our sin; in getting us to accept the loving help of God in resisting and overcoming it. When that is done in us, we are saved, and never till then. That is the revelation of the heart of God which is made to us in the life and death of Jesus Christ. It is made in part in his life and teachings, but it could not have been fully made without the agony of the garden and the cross. And when it takes hold of us, and shames us, and humbles us, and compels our trust and draws forth our affection, then Christ, as Paul says, is formed in us; and we are ready to strive to put away our sins, and to rise with him into newness of life.

But there is nothing, as you see, in all this, that

is legal, or judicial or governmental; there is no transference of penalty or guilt; the transaction is all moral or spiritual; it is the struggle of righteousness and love in the heart of God which reveals to the sinner his lack of righteousness and his need of love.

There is a great lesson in all this for those of us who wish to have part in this great work of redemption. If it were a legal or governmental work, of course we could have no part in it; for we are not called to administer the divine government, or to enforce the law of God. But if it is a work that is all done within the realm of character, — if it is a work which depends wholly on moral and spiritual forces, then we may have something to do with it; and the call to be partners with Christ in his saving work is not a meaningless call. And I suppose that no man is ever truly saved who is not inspired with the wish and the purpose to be a savior. If this desire is kindled in our hearts, we shall need to take the yoke of our Master upon us, and learn of him. There is no salvation without suffering; every savior must be a sufferer. We cannot save men without so identifying ourselves with them, that their sin and their shame become, through sympathy, a part of our experience. We must love them enough to be willing to suffer for them and with them, that they may be saved. The deeper is our affection for them, the more revolting to our

moral sense will be the vice and greed and brutality that are destroying them; their sins will pain us, at first, far more than they will pain them; but if they can be sure that we really care for them, they may at last be brought to hate their sins as we hate them, and to strive to put them away.

This is the lesson that we must learn if we want to rescue the vicious and the wayward and the degraded and the miserable, and bring them back to life and happiness. Both these elements must be in our characters, — the righteousness that hates sin, the love that yearns over the sinner. Righteousness without love is powerless; love without righteousness is degrading. When the two unite in a struggle for the sinking soul, there is suffering, and it is only through the suffering that there can be salvation.

The two elements are often separated. There are plenty who hate sin and are bitter enough in their condemnation of it; whose moral judgments are very keen and stern when they deal with the misdoings of their fellows; who are ready to censure and punish iniquity, but who have no love for the sinner that moves them to identify themselves with him, and share his shame and misery, so that they may save him. On the other side there are many who are full of a goody-goody philanthropism which coddles and pets transgressors, which makes them think that they are as good as the best of men,

if not a little better, which sends them flowers in prison and makes light of all their offenses and thinks to reclaim them by a sentimental charity that blots out the eternal distinctions of righteousness. Neither of these ways of dealing with the wayward and the depraved will be found effectual. We can do nothing worth while for any human being who is in deepest need unless we have in our hearts a love that identifies us with him, — a righteous love that feels his sin as a stain or a wound, and that makes him feel it too; that will not gloss over his offenses, and make him comfortable in them, but that is ready to fight to the death for him and with him, in recovering his manhood.

There is also a great lesson in all this for those who know that they have sinned and need salvation. Do not, my friends, imagine that there is any legal scheme by which the penalty due to your sin is to be inflicted on some innocent being, so that you may go free. Do not conceive that by any kind of legal arrangement God's displeasure may be averted from you, and his favor guaranteed to you. Nothing of that kind would satisfy your own sense of justice. On the other hand, you must not suffer yourself to believe that the Eternal God in whose image we are made is one who is indifferent to the evil that infests your life. He can no more be indifferent to it than you can be indifferent to the signs of depravity that you find in the character

of the child whom you dearly love. You know that the better man you are, and the more tenderly and truly you love your child, the keener would be the pain if you found him false or cruel or brutish. If you, being evil, can suffer so much when your child goes wrong, how much more must the infinite Purity suffer when you go wrong. If you want some inkling of how he suffers, look at Jesus in the Garden. That comes the nearest to telling it of anything that the world has ever seen. That is the kind of love with which you are dealing, — a holy love, a righteous love — which cares for nothing in you so much as the values of character; which can never be satisfied till you are sound and pure and true; which must always suffer with you, and for you, until you turn from your sin, and let him save you by his love.

That, my friend, is what redemption means. You see that it means suffering; that the loving Father of such children as we are must needs be a Sufferer. Patterson DuBois tells us what is the true attitude of a father toward his disobedient child. "We are not," he says, "to say: 'I will conquer that child, no matter what it may cost him;' but we are to say, 'I will help that child to conquer himself, no matter what it may cost me.'" That is the Fatherhood of God as Jesus has revealed it; that is the significance of Gethsemane and Calvary.

I hope that this great truth has been made plain

in this discussion. I have tried to use the simplest words, and to avoid embellishments. It is not a theme for rhetorical treatment; it calls for quiet tones and homely phrases. If it has not conveyed to you a deeper and diviner meaning in the sufferings of Christ than the traditional explanation gave, then something essential has been lost in its transmission from my mind to yours. That it is a truth of tremendous import; that it throws a flood of æonian light on all our philanthropic problems; that it shows us very clearly what our personal relation to God must be, — what is done for us and what is done in us to save us from our sins, I hope that you can see.

I wonder if any one can think seriously of this truth that the cross reveals, — this truth of the suffering love of God for us men, — and not be touched and moved by it. What a pathos it lends to life to know that such love as that is watching us, waiting for us, grieving over us, longing to help us, — yea, that even now it is wounded by our transgressions and bruised by our iniquities; that a wrath that is holden by a love that will not let go, and a love that is pitiless toward the sin that destroys the soul, are struggling evermore in the heart of the Father above. Is there no answer from our human hearts to this great compassion, this seeking, pleading, suffering love of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

X

WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS

Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. — JOHN xx. 21–23.

THIS occurred after our Lord's resurrection, on the evening of that first day of the week on which he rose from the dead. The disciples were gathered together and the doors were shut, for fear of the Jews, and they were all talking, eagerly and wistfully no doubt, of the reports that had come to them of his reappearance, when suddenly he came in, unannounced and unnoticed, and stood among them, saying, "Peace be unto you!" "The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord." It is not at all like a ghost story; his presence among them seemed to them perfectly simple and natural. And again he said unto them, "Peace be unto you!" How deep was the Master's wish that his disciples should share his peace! Is it not, indeed, the one gift of which most of his disciples in these days are most in need? What better word

could he speak to *this* company than to stand here in the midst of us and stretch forth his hands and say, "Peace be unto you! You anxious, troubled, restless, feverish, toiling, worrying souls, let me share with all of you my peace!"

"As the Father hath sent me," he goes on, "even so send I you." Surely, if we are going out into the world, as he did, to confront its sin, its madness, its envy, its spite, we need his peace in our hearts.

"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." It is a most impressive symbolism. In many languages — in the language which our Lord used as well as in our own — "the spirit does but mean the breath." And what he meant was that the spirit which had dwelt in him, the very life of his life, the essential truth and love which he had incarnated and manifested, was to pass into their lives; that, as he in his life had manifested God to men, so, in their measure, should they in their lives.

And now, because they are to be the sharers of his life, inheritors of his spirit, he commits to them another august and momentous function. It is that of forgiving sin. "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

There is no use in beating about this passage

and trying to explain it away; there it is, in language most express and intelligible: the power of forgiving sins belongs to the company of those who have received from their Lord the impartation of his life, who are partakers and inheritors of his spirit. One of the modern commentators thus tries to dispose of these words: "The meaning of the passage is not that man can forgive sins; that belongs only to God; but the meaning is that *they* [the Apostles] should be *inspired;* that in founding the church and in declaring the will of God they should be taught by the Holy Ghost to declare on what terms, to what characters, and to what temper of mind God would extend forgiveness of sins. It was not authority to forgive individuals, but to establish in all the churches the terms and conditions on which men might be pardoned, with the assurance that God would confirm all that they taught; that men might have assurance of forgiveness who would comply with those terms, and that those who did not comply should not be forgiven, and their sins should be retained." It seems to me that this is about as complete an evasion of the Master's words as could possibly be fabricated. What he says is not at all that his disciples should have power to declare the terms on which God will forgive sins, but that they themselves should have the power to forgive them. And yet you will observe that it is to the body of the

disciples, and not to any individual, that this power is given. There is no shadow of a hint that this is an official function, committed to the priesthood and withheld from the people. The Roman Catholic notion of absolution — that it is only the priest, in his official character, who can declare the forgiveness of sins — finds no support in this narrative. That notion, which is the foundation of sacerdotalism, and which prevails not only in the Roman Catholic Church, but in some sections of the English Church, has wrought much mischief. It was not to some powerful ecclesiastical machine, it was not to some agent of that ecclesiasticism, it was not to some class of religious officials, that this power was committed. Those who were present on this occasion were, as John tells us, "the disciples," not merely the Apostles. Luke informs us that this company included "the eleven and *them that were with them.*" And in the Acts of the Apostles he makes it probable that the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brethren were present on this occasion. There is no intimation that it was upon the eleven Apostles, called apart from the rest of the group, that Jesus breathed, saying unto *them*, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." If such a separation of them from the rest of the company had occurred, it must have been mentioned. Every trait of the narrative leads to the conclusion that the whole company shared in this symbolical im-

partation of the divine spirit, and were included in this divine commission. That the clergy, as the successors of the Apostles, have the power to forgive sins, and that this power does not belong to the laity, is a conclusion to which this narrative gives no color. And St. Peter himself, who is sometimes supposed to have received this power in some especial degree, declares in his first Epistle that the people — not the elders nor the officers of the church, but the people — "are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood." Peter himself makes no claim of power to exercise this priestly function; he says that it belongs to the people.

But the commentator whose words I have quoted reminds us that Isaiah has represented Jehovah as saying that God only can forgive sin. This is his citation: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions." I am at a loss to know how this text proves the doctrine. It simply asserts that God does forgive; it does not deny that man may forgive. The Scribes and Pharisees are the only authority, so far as I know, for the limitation of this power to Deity. "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" was their indignant query when our Lord once told a poor sufferer that his sins were forgiven.

It is the constant assumption of the teaching of our Lord that men may and must forgive sin; that it is the fundamental duty of the Christian. Many

of his most impressive parables enforce this duty; no one ever offers the Lord's Prayer without acknowledging it: "Forgive our debts, for we have forgiven our debtors."

"But this," it will be said, "is not exactly what we are talking about. Doubtless it is our duty to forgive those who have trespassed against us, — that is, to hold no grudge against them, to cherish no personal resentment toward them. We may forgive the injuries which they have done us; but that is not what is meant by forgiving their sins." I answer that the highest Christian obligation to the man who has injured us is not discharged when we simply make up our minds that we will not cherish a grudge against him. That may, in many cases, be about all that we can do; his state of mind may be such that nothing else can be done for him; but it is by no means all that the genuine Christian spirit will wish to do for him. The real forgiveness of sins is not merely the cancellation of their penalties; it is the loosening of the sins themselves from the heart of the sinner; it is the fruit of that gentle graciousness which softens the bad temper, and kindles a better purpose, and gets the bad mind out of the man, so that his offenses shall be repugnant to his own feelings, so that he shall no longer find any pleasure in his transgressions. This is what Paul means when he says, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even

as God also in Christ forgave you." This means a great deal more than ceasing to hold grudges against those who have injured us; it implies a spirit and a purpose which sincerely compassionates the wrong-doer — which is sorry for him more than for ourselves; which recognizes the fact that he is doing himself a far greater wrong than he is inflicting on us; which will not rest until the evil spirit that infests his life is somehow exorcised.

What are those great words of Paul's? "Forgiving one another, *even as God in Christ forgave you?*" Is that simply giving over the grudge — forbearing retaliation? Has the Christly forgiveness this extent, no more? No; it is a forgiveness whose main purpose it is to change the mind and the heart of the sinner; to conquer his alienation; to supplant hate by love, and suspicion by trust, and fear by confidence. And we are to forgive one another *in the same way* that God in Christ forgives us. Our forgiveness, like his, is not merely wiping off the old score; it is a patient, generous, self-sacrificing effort to save the sinner from his sin.

It seems very clear to me, therefore, that what our Lord says in the text is to be taken exactly as he says it, with no abatement or evasion. His disciples in this world are co-workers with him in every part of his work. We are partners with him in his death, in his resurrection, in his work of atonement, in his work of redemption. We fill up that which

is behind of the sufferings of Christ; we are crucified with him that we may rise and reign with him; we sit with him upon his throne. And, this being so, the work of forgiveness is a part of the work of every Christian disciple. To the church on earth this function is especially committed. We might almost say that it is the main business of Christian men in this world to forgive sins. Surely that was our Master's main business here; and if we are sent into the world upon the same errand that brought him, it must be our main business too. Have we ever so conceived of it? Has not this truth, as I have sought to present it, — that the work of the church is very largely the work of forgiving sins, — struck your minds with some surprise? How sad and strange it is that a truth so nearly fundamental should be so utterly obscured by centuries of dull philosophizing!

I have said that the power of forgiving sin belongs to every Christian disciple, and belongs to him precisely to the extent to which he has received the spirit of Christ and is identified with him in his work of salvation. All those who have fully realized the meaning of that symbolical act which is described in the text — all those into whom the Lord has truly breathed his own spirit — possess this power. It is possible for all such, not only to suppress their own resentments on account of the wrongs which they have suffered; it is also possible

for them to forgive sins, in a very much deeper and more radical sense than this — sins which have no reference to themselves at all.

Here is one who has brought sorrow and loss and shame upon himself by his own misdeeds, and who is now overwhelmed with a sense of his folly and sin, and feels that he has made shipwreck of life. In the depths of his remorse and despair there comes to him a friend whose character he knows to be pure and blameless, in whose truth and integrity he has perfect confidence; and this friend takes him to his home, and speaks cheerful and reassuring words to him, and tells him that he must not despair; that all is not lost; that out of that decaying past may spring a better future — even as the new life of the plant springs from the decaying seed; that God's love and help are for the neediest and the most miserable; and that the love and the help of all God's true children are for them also. What effect would such a manifestation of friendship have upon this unhappy man? What other effect could it have than to lift, at any rate in part, the burden of shame and woe that was crushing him to earth; to send a ray of light and hope through the darkness which was girding him round? The fact that a man as good as he believes this one to be can think kindly of him and cherish hope for him is like a cooling draught to the thirst of fever; like the cordial to the fainting heart. The doom of the

evil is not remediless, for this love and grace have come in with a blessed alleviation. And this forgiveness, revealed to him by this good man, helps him to believe in God. "If there is such sympathy and divine pity in the heart of godlike men," he reasons, "what must there be in the heart of God himself?" And thus he comes back to hope and faith and courage, and is set free, in large measure, from the fetters with which his own sins had bound him.

What is this but the very work of the divine forgiveness? And it is wrought in the life of this man by the revelation to him of the divine love in the heart of his brother. You may say that it is God who really forgives him, it is true, but it is God revealed in the life of a man. Such marvels are wrought every day, all round the world, by love divine manifested in human lives. And yet there are those who will argue that there can be no such thing as forgiveness — no such thing as the remission of sins. Nothing but law, they will tell you; nothing but stern, inexorable, relentless law; all talk about setting a man free from the consequences of his sin is sentimental foolishness. Well, I believe in law as strongly as anybody believes in it, and I can see the dire consequences of sin, and I know that so long as any man persists in doing wrong those consequences will not cease to be visited upon him; but I can also see that there is something in

this world deeper and diviner and mightier than law, and that is love. The consequences of the man's sin — its worst consequences — were the moral helplessness and despair in which it left him; that was the chain with which he was bound; but love came in and loosed this chain and set him free; made him believe in the possibility of a better life. Strange that men who see this kind of work going on before their eyes should doubt the possibility of God's forgiving grace, should fail to see that the greatest thing in the world — in all the worlds — is not law, but love. The trouble is, of course, that there is so much less of this kind of work going on than there ought to be. The world is never without examples of such divine beneficence displayed in human lives; but they are, after all, far less frequent than they should be at the end of the nineteenth Christian century. If you and I had only understood what Jesus meant when he breathed on his disciples and sent them forth to forgive and save their fallen brethren, skepticism about the divine forgiveness would find small footing in the neighborhood where we live. For it is only men with this forgiving and saving love in their hearts who can make their neighbors believe in the forgiving and saving love of God.

To individuals, as I have shown, this power may be communicated. Not to official individuals; it is a kind of power which officialism almost certainly

taints and perverts. No man can forgive sins *ex officio*. That is the poison which paralyzes all kinds of sacerdotalism. It is not by virtue of his office that any man forgives sin; it is by virtue of the divine life immediately communicated to him. And this work of forgiveness will be done by him, not when he assumes to do it, for the assumption of such power does not at all help us to believe that it is there; it is the unconscious outgoing of human love and sympathy that conveys it. It is not when men pretend to speak for God that they really reveal him; it is when they just speak out of the tenderness and compassion of their own hearts that they manifest the divine love.

But while the power of forgiveness does reside in individual lives, — just to the extent to which they are filled with the divine love, — it is also true that this power is given in an especial degree to the brotherhood of Christian believers. It was to this brotherhood, as I have explained, that it was first communicated. The main purpose for which these disciples were banded together was that they might receive the divine life and be able to manifest it in this way. That is the purpose of the church to-day. For I suppose that He who is the Head of the church, and from whom all our life comes, is saying to this brotherhood of believers, as truly as to those in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, "Receive ye the gift of the Holy Ghost:

whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." O beloved, it is a tremendous responsibility that is thus committed to us! Round about us, on every side of us, in the shops and offices where we spend our days, in the homes where we live, here in these pews, how many there are who need this grace of our forgiveness! They have sinned, and their souls are darkened and their hope is quenched by their sin, and they go stumbling on, lacking the courage to turn to better ways, needing just the reassurance that our sympathy and love might give them. If we would manifest to them the divine goodness, they would be forgiven and saved. How easy it is for a company of kindred souls, all dowered with this divine compassion, to gather round one of these hopeless and helpless ones, and lift the burden of shame and despair from him, and set him on his feet, and send him on his way with a new song in his mouth! How easy it is — if only the spirit of Christ is in us! I knew one who, when a youth, fell into evil associations, and was implicated in crime, and went to prison. Some of the people of the church to whose Sunday-school he had belonged found it in their hearts to forgive him. They believed that he had been more sinned against than sinning; they believed that he could be saved; they kept in communication with him; after awhile they secured for

him a pardon, and then they brought him home, and set him in the midst of them, and said to him: "Brother, the past for us is annihilated; let it be for you also. Go right back to your place in the the choir, in the Sunday-school; you have the same friends you always had, only nearer and firmer now, as your need is greater; we will stand by you; you shall prove that you are a man." From that hour the young man stood fast in honesty and industry; he rose to be a great manufacturer and employer of men; he poured out his gains by the thousand in worthy charities; the church which had forgiven and saved him was enriched in after years by his munificence. What worlds of just such work as that are waiting at the door of every church, — sometimes even within its doors, — and yet how little of that work is done! For, alas! the other side of this commission is fatally effective: "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them;" yes, thank God! but "Whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." How many there are on whom the shadow of disgrace has fallen who look in vain for the glance of sympathy, who listen in vain for the word of cheer! In every company they meet averted faces, garments pulled aside from the defiling touch, muffled words of greeting, as from behind an impenetrable screen! Nobody cares for them, nobody sees any good in them, nobody believes in them.

Will you listen to these words? I have cut them from a newspaper that is in the hands of many of you, but if you have read them once you can well afford to hear them again: —

"There is a wonderful tonic in the consciousness that others believe in us, see something aspiring and noble in us, discern the possibility of recovery in us. Discouragement and despair are the moods in which men throw themselves away; more men are finally lost to themselves and to society in the hour when no human being seems to believe in them than at any other time. To make a man realize that, despite all his sins, somebody still finds in him ground for confidence and material for hope, is often to revive his dying spirit and give him courage for one more struggle with his temptations. When everybody gives him up as lost, he is generally lost. Faith is the vital spirit of great achievements, but faith must find its resting-place in man as well as in God; one must inspire his fellow with its sublime sympathy as well as inspire himself with its sublime hope. There is no limit to the divine tenderness and love expressed in the words and works of Christ, and there is, therefore, no limit to the divine faith in the recuperative power of the human soul; for the unwearied seeking of those who are lost is meaningless unless behind the search there is faith in the power to find and succor. We ought to believe in each other in the blackest times, be-

cause God believes in us. Not only did the dying thief believe in Christ, but Christ believed in him. The time to give up a soul as lost never comes in this world; God never deserts men, however they may desert him. And the time to give faith its greatest opportunity is the hour when the man has lost all faith in himself; when he feels that he has severed all ties and stands friendless and solitary in a world whose order he has violated. Faith expressed in another in such an hour has often been the door through which a lost man has come back to himself again, and in another's forbearance and love has once more come to believe himself a child of God."

It is the only door through which many of the lost will ever get back to life again. There is a great multitude to whom the divine forgiveness will never be revealed unless it is revealed in human lives. If the men and women who represent God stand aloof from them, silent, unmerciful, they will not and cannot believe in the pity and sympathy of God. We are the ambassadors who are sent with this message; we fail to convey it, and it never reaches them. If we would forgive their sins, they would be forgiven; we withhold the love we ought to give, and there is none to give it; we *retain their sins*, and they are retained, and the hapless souls go darkling down to death bearing the burden of their shame and woe.

O my people! I would that we, who stand together in this brotherhood, could get some faint conception of that solemn scene which we have been studying, when the risen Christ bestowed upon his church the benediction of his own spirit and life, and called them to be his representatives in the work of forgiving and saving men. For this is the calling wherewith we are called; this is the service to which we are summoned. May he in his infinite mercy forgive us that we so often have shut the door of hope which he sent us to open, and have stifled the word of life which he bade us speak. And let us ask him once more, in all humility, to breathe into our souls his own gracious spirit, that we may find within our hearts the impulse and the power of forgiving and saving men.

XI

THE MIGHT OF BEGINNINGS

Wherefore, if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. — 2 Cor. v. 17.

I HAVE given here the marginal reading of the new version, which is the exact rendering of the Greek; it is not merely a new creature but a new creation which results from the implanting of the Christ life in the soul. The individual is changed and the change transfigures the environment. To him, at any rate, the world is a different world from what it was before. Paul indicates the significance of the transformation by the word "Behold!" It comes to him with a delightful surprise. When the cataract is removed a new landscape, a new sky appear, with new meaning in human faces, and new pleasure in all things beautiful. The change in the powers of the man means a transformation of the world in which he lives. If any man is in Christ there is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.

The marvel is that such a change can take place so quickly as here seems to be presumed. The

answer is that to the consciousness there need be no such transformation. The figure of the couched eye may here mislead us. The change which is wrought in a man when the Christ life becomes the central principle of his conduct does not always signalize itself by such remarkable experiences. That it does sometimes so reveal itself in human consciousness, — that the man is made aware that something very wonderful has happened to him is not to be questioned. But I say that this is by no means the uniform experience. And yet a mighty change has taken place, even though the man may have little comprehension of its significance. The new creation is there, even though its beauty is yet veiled and its vastness is undreamed of. "Now are we the sons of God," cries the apostle, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." The work of regeneration has begun in us, and who can tell the might and majesty of such beginnings.

Really, the most significant and wonderful things in this world are what we call beginnings. In life, that is to say in purely physical life, we hardly know when to date the beginnings. The acorn is the beginning of the oak; the towering monarch of the forest is there, — the potency of it, every element that lives in it, — in that small glossy inclosure. When the acorn feels the moisture of the soil and the warmth of the sun, and the germ begins to swell, we say that the oak has begun to be. Even

in that beginning there is something marvelous. That there should be force enough in that small germ to produce the giant tree that will wrestle with the gales of centuries and produce the germs of hundreds of thousands more like unto itself is not much short of a miracle. Yet, after all, we cannot quite clearly fix the beginnings of this life. It did not really begin when the acorn sprouted; it was there before, packed away in its brown little casket, waiting for months, perhaps for years. It was stored there by the processes of growth while it hung upon the parent tree. It was the life which was in that parent tree that vitalized this acorn; and the parent tree drew its life from the acorn that inclosed its germ. Thus we go backward, along this chain of transformations, and we do not find the beginnings. We only know that all these living things must have derived their life from Him who is the only source of life. "In the beginning, God." That is all we can say. These processes of reproduction are magical, — the crescendo and diminuendo of the vital forces as they build up the organism, and then shrink back into the germ — as they mount into the stupendous *Sequoia gigantea*, and then dwindle to the tiny seed to which the life is bequeathed, and by which it is perpetuated. All this is full of wonder; but we find here, after all, no true beginnings; we have only the stages in an evolutionary movement which has been going on for countless

æons. Of all this we know that there was a beginning; and what a beginning was that, when God said, "Let life be," and life was! What a beginning was that when, in the weltering inorganic chaos, the first living cell trembled and palpitated with the life that is the gift of God! Out of that beginning, what was yet to come! — the mosses and the grasses and the flower blooms and the forests; the fishes of the sea, and the insects in the sunshine, and the birds upon the wing, and the beasts upon the earth, and all the tribes of humankind with their age-long development of arts, letters, laws, — with the rise and progress, the decline and fall of empires, dynasties, civilizations; with their thousands of millions of human hearts beating with the passion of love, the joys of home, the hopes of heaven.

While, however, we cannot in any case distinctly mark what we know to be a clear beginning of physical life — since everything that lives draws its life from a living parent — *omne vivum ex viro* — yet there are, in the intellectual world and in the spiritual world, true beginnings. "The soul," says Lotze, "evolves from itself resolutions, starting points for future movements. . . . The universal course of things may at every moment have innumerable beginnings whose origin lies outside of it, but can have none not necessarily continued within it. When such beginnings are to be found we can-

not say beforehand with certainty; but if experience convinces us that every event of external nature is at the same time an effect having its cause in preceding facts, it still remains possible that the cycle of inner *mental* life does not consist throughout of a rigid mechanism working necessarily, but that along with unlimited freedom of will it also possesses a limited power of *absolute commencement.*" [1]

There are, then, in the world of mind new things, beginnings; existences of each of which you could have said, a little while ago, "It was not," but of which you must now say "It is." Every conscious human spirit is such an existence. There was a time, my friend, when that mind of yours which reasons and worships and hopes and loves, was not; there was a time when it began to be. I enter into no speculation about the biological origins; I am talking about the conscious free intelligence; and that, I say, had a beginning. There is a date, not very remote, which marks the origin of your thinking powers. That such a beginning should be, that such a force should start from nothingness is, I think, a miracle as great as any I have ever read of. If to any man it is not miraculous, it is because he has not thought of it.

But not only is there a beginning of existence to every conscious intelligence, there are also many

[1] *Microcosmus*, vol. i. p. 261.

beginnings of activities in every conscious intelligence. "The soul evolves from itself resolutions, starting points for future movements." Even in the world of science this is true. For although science is a collection of facts, and the facts on which it rests have always existed, yet the triumphs of science consist in putting these facts in their proper relation, — in comprehending and stating them. Science gives us not merely the facts, but the truth about them. What is truth? It is the correspondence of thought and word to fact. The fact of gravitation had existed from the morning of the creation; Newton seized it with his thought, and put the thought into words; he told the truth about it. The fact was there in the atoms and the masses of matter, but the truth had not yet dawned upon the mind. The fact had always been, but there was a moment when the truth began to be — when the mind of the discoverer laid hold on the fact, and set it in its relation to other facts, and thus made it his own.

See Faraday in his laboratory, patiently experimenting, night and day, with his coils of wire, his magnets, his voltaic piles! Something is there, he guesses, — but he does not know. It is something that nobody yet has known, and that nobody but him has guessed. For years he has been patiently trying to get this guess to materialize. "I am busy again," he writes to a friend, "on electro-magnetism,

and think I have got hold of a good thing, but can't say. It may be a weed instead of a fish that, after all my labor, I may at last pull up." Nine days later he got it out of water, and it was not a weed; it was the tremendous fact of the induction of electric currents, the discovery out of which have come the immense developments of electric science, of whose wonders we are just beginning to reap the first fruits. There was a moment when this was a mere hypothesis in Faraday's mind, such stuff as dreams are made of; the next moment it was not a hypothesis, it was a scientific truth; he had verified it; he could say of it not, "It may be so," but "It *is* so." Electrical induction had emerged from the realms of intellectual chaos into the realms of order and law; it was a new creation. And what a creation it was! Nobody knew all that it signified; nobody knows yet; but in that clearly ascertained truth, reported by Faraday to the Royal Society, November 24, 1831, was packed the vast outcome of modern electrical science, as the oak is packed in the acorn.

Here is Alexander Graham Bell groping after a fact that his mind has not yet seized; he has followed the clue a long while, but it has eluded him; at last the truth dawns, the vision is verified; thought has wedded fact; the conveyance of sound by currents of electricity is no longer a possibility, it is a reality. The telephone is all there, with all

that it implies, in that first successful experiment. The apparatus is rude, but the principle is clear. A few moments ago the telephone *was not;* now it *is;* the idea, the constructive principle, the essence of the whole marvelous method of communication is there. You would not say of this rude machine, "If it lives, and prospers, and is properly shaped up and worked over and perfected, it will by and by turn out to be a telephone;" no: you must say it *is* a telephone. It does the business. It carries sound waves on electric currents. It may be improved, no doubt; it may be made a better telephone, but a telephone it is to-day. This is the beginning of its history.

And we must not fail to note that the step which was taken when the induction of electric currents ceased to be a conjecture and became a scientific fact, or when the conveyance of sound by electricity passed from a dream into a reality, was a far longer step than any which followed in the development of these principles. The difference between nothing and something is far greater than the difference between something and anything. From a poor telephone to a good telephone the distance can be measured; from no telephone to telephone it is immeasurable. It is this that makes beginnings more significant and memorable than words can express.

This truth about the greatness of beginnings

finds one of its illustrations in Christian experience. The New Testament teaches us that the life of faith in Christ, the Christian life, has a beginning. "Repent!" is its message. "Change your minds. Begin anew. Get you a new heart, a new spirit." It does not counsel us to make the old life better; it calls on us to begin a new life. It puts a strong emphasis on the need of beginning anew.

This very fact is sometimes urged as a criticism upon the Christian doctrine. "No such change is possible," men say. "Character is not made in a day. All this talk about being born again — about becoming a new man — is misleading and mischievous." Yes, it may be, if you do not understand it. Perfection of Christian character is not reached in a day. The telephone was not perfected in a day; but the idea, the essential telephone, was born in a minute. So with the Christian character. "Complete realization," says President Harris, "lies in the future, but the type itself, in the principle and power of it, is already actual. Because the type now exists, its complete attainment is to be expected. I regard this as one of the most important considerations for Christian ethics as well as one of the most unique features of the Christian religion. It explains and combines the statements of Scripture that man is to be saved in the future and yet is saved in the present;

that he will have and that he now has eternal life."

The truth is, that becoming a Christian does mean beginning a new kind of life. It is the abandonment of the life of self-pleasing, and the acceptance of the life of unselfish service. This is the gist of it. To take Christ as Lord and Master and to strive to become identified with him in heart and life, can mean nothing less than this. We know what kind of life he lived, and what must be the nature of the life that we shall live if we become his disciples. To become a Christian is to make intelligent and resolute choice of this kind of life. It is to look upon the Man of Nazareth, until the real meaning of his life takes possession of our thought, and then to say, with all seriousness, that is the kind of man I am going to be, God helping me.

Now, I have no doubt that there are many outside the church of God who have said this to themselves — or what amounts to this; who are seriously trying to live the unselfish life. Whenever or however they came into this state of mind it matters not; if this is their real purpose they are Christians; theirs is essential Christianity, whether it is nominal Christianity or not. But there are a great many more, I fear, who have come to no such understanding with themselves; who have no purpose of living unselfishly; who will hardly admit

that such a thing is possible; who will frankly say that they mean to look out for themselves, and do not intend to be held back from pushing their own interests by any fine notions about brotherly love and kindness. There are a good many such people, I fear, inside the Christian church. Of course, it is not necessary to say that with them the great beginning of which we are speaking, has never taken place. That new creation, which Paul refers to in the text, has not yet touched their lives. Some of them are trying to improve the "old man," and are making very little headway; the new man, in Christ Jesus, has not been born in them.

Now let one of these, living a life that is consciously self-centred, be brought to see that it is not the true life for one of the sons of God, and let him in his heart determine to live the life that Christ lived — not to be ministered unto but to minister; not to get as much as he can from everybody, but to give as much as he can to everybody — when he has thoughtfully and heartily made that choice, is it not true that he is a different man from what he was before; that the type has actually changed? The man may yet be very far from perfect; the old selfishness and the ingrained meanness are not extirpated; he is often doing things that he is ashamed of — and more things, perhaps, that he ought to be ashamed of, and will be, when his conscience is better educated; but still this type

of the Christ life is before him; this is his ideal; he knows that he has not attained, that he is not yet perfect, but with Paul he follows after, if that he may apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended him. He sees the kind of man that he means to be, and amid many discouragements and defeats he presses on toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

When this kind of life actually begins in any soul, ever so feebly, ever so faintly, is it not a mighty beginning? Is not this kind of life differentiated, by the diameter of the infinite, from the other kind of life? Is it any extravagance to say of one in whom this change has taken place, "There is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, they have become new?" And when a principle like this has taken hold on a man's life, do we not perceive that a power is at work which is able to transform him utterly?

"Starting points, epochs," says President Harris, "are the points of chief importance. An intellectual awakening occurs. The youth who had been frivolous, fond of sports, a pleasure seeker, all at once, by some book casually read, or under the inspiration of a teacher, is aroused mentally and finds himself in a new world. His intellectual character is changed, and he is already a scholar before actual attainments have been made." I have seen exactly this taking place more than once. Nay —

I must not withhold the confession — I have passed through this experience. I was once a boy to whom study was a burden, and I became a boy to whom study was a delight. And this was not a growth, it was an awakening. It took place because a strong intellectual impulse came into my life. It took place suddenly; old things passed away, the old indifference, listlessness; all things became new; I had new purposes and ambitions. I was not much of a scholar surely, and yet I had, in those first hours, all the essential qualities of the scholar. And when anybody tells me that a life cannot be radically changed by the entrance of new ruling ideas and purposes, I know better. So does every man know better who has taken the least pains to observe what is going on around him in the world.

Changes of precisely this nature do take place in the moral and spiritual life of men. Men are not only gradually made better; they are *transformed*, as Paul says, by *the renewing of their minds;* by getting hold of a new idea of what life means. And it is the greatest thing that can possibly happen to a man, to get hold of such a new and noble idea — an idea that commands the assent of his reason and masters his will. "All is well with him now," you say. "Loyalty to a truth like that will save him, regenerate him, ennoble him. The work is not yet done, but there is a power at work that will do it."

And this, the New Testament writers always assume, is just what happens to a man when he comes fully under the influence of Jesus Christ, and gets, by induction, as it were, the mind of Christ into his mind. He may still be a very imperfect man, but he is a different kind of man from what he was before, and he ought to know it. The type has changed. There is a new ideal. Something of tremendous importance has taken place in him, and he ought to be aware of it, and to rejoice in it. It is only a beginning, but beginnings are mighty. It is a longer step than he will ever take again, even though he rise to the heights of Christian attainment; for the difference between a self-centred and a God-centred life is vastly greater than any difference between higher and lower in those who have the Christ life in them.

My friends, I think that there are some among you who need to lay hold upon this truth. You have been trying, too long, to patch up and renovate the old selfish scheme of life, and you know that it is a difficult and a hopeless business. "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon the old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old." What you really want is not to fix over and piece out the old scheme of life, by which you have undertaken to make yourself as comfortable as you can, and to have as little care as pos-

sible for anybody else, but to take up a new plan of life altogether — a plan in which service, not mastery, is the central idea; a plan which shall involve committing yourself, with all your powers and possessions, to the same work that Jesus Christ came into the world to do. Of course, when you take up this purpose it will be only a beginning, but it will be a mighty beginning, and you ought to know and feel that it is. More than anything that has yet taken place in your life, it will lift you up and ennoble you. Perhaps some of you feel that you are in danger of losing yourselves. Doubtless there is danger. Do you not believe that this would save you? What will become of the petty grievances and irritations which gall your pride and wound your selfhood, when this great purpose takes possession of your soul? What are the losses and the disappointments and the anxieties of our earthly condition to one whose chief care is to do good to all men as he has opportunity? It is a new world, indeed, into which a man is led forth, when Christ is formed in him; when his life is joined, by the bonds of a living fellowship, with the life of the Son of man. There is a new creation; the morning stars are singing together and the sons of God are shouting for joy. No one ever knows how beautiful this world is, how fair its fields, how glorious its skies, till he has looked upon it with eyes anointed by a great affection. Under the spell of

such a revelation all tasks are sweet, all burdens light. Into this liberty of the glory of the sons of God may some of you, who labor and are heavy-laden, be led to-day, by Him who is the Way and the Truth and the Life!

XII

THE OBSCURATION OF THE CHRIST

When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory. — Col. iii. 4.

Through all the epistles we find a note of suspense and expectation. The consummation of the hopes of these believers is deferred and they are anxiously awaiting it. They are identified with Christ in all their thoughts and aims; they live in him and for him; he is the champion of their days and the inspiration of their dreams, but his glory is now obscured: what they are waiting for is the manifestation of that glory to the world. The apparent triumph of sin and death over him was only temporary, of that they are confident; the glimpses that they had of him after his resurrection convinced them of his power over all the forces of evil, and they know that he must surely establish his kingdom on the earth; that he will come again and reign till he shall have put all enemies under his feet. Now he is beyond their sight, and the light of his presence and the glory of his power are hidden. But this period of obscuration cannot last. He will be manifested in glory, and he will take to

himself the kingdom. This is their faith, and it nerves them to face governors and kings in calm reliance upon his power; to encounter hardship, persecution, peril by sea and by land, in their great work of proclaiming him as king and in calling on all men to accept his leadership and to await with them the revelation of his divinity. This was the great hope which animated all the apostles of our Lord, and all the writers of the New Testament. Looking back to that dawn of the new dispensation, studying the words in which they set forth their hopes, and trying to put ourselves in their places, it is impossible not to see that they were holding a great truth under an imperfect form. In this, as in other matters, they saw, as Paul said, in a blurred mirror dimly. They believed that the man Jesus, whom they had known in the flesh, was soon coming back to earth in human form, to set up a visible kingdom here. Of course this visible kingdom was, in their minds, only the outward symbol of a spiritual kingdom; what they really longed for was the triumph of truth and love and peace and good-will upon earth; but they supposed that this would be accompanied by and manifested through the return of their Master in the form of a man, to establish some kind of an organized visible divine society on the earth. There is no doubt that this was their expectation. Such a reappearance of Christ they looked for to take place during their

lifetime. Paul tells the Thessalonians very positively that Jesus is coming back to earth while they are alive; he argues to prove that those Christians who shall have died will not miss the glory of the reappearance; that the living saints will have no advantage over those who have gone on before, because the latter will be raised from their graves to behold the glorious spectacle. About all these details we now know that the apostles were mistaken. They must have misunderstood what the Lord had told them; they often misunderstood him while he was here; it is certainly not incredible that they should have put a wrong construction upon words of his which they recalled after he had gone. And we must not forget that their report of what he said is all we have to go upon. If we find some words of his respecting this matter which we cannot understand, and which do not seem to have been fulfilled, it is more reasonable to suppose that the apostles misunderstood him than that he used the language attributed to him.

It was, however, only the form and costume of the great truth concerning which they were in error. The substance of the truth they held and taught; that the Christ whom they trusted and followed was hidden from the world, that his presence and his glory were now obscured, and that by and by they would shine forth as the sun,— all this was profoundly and grandly true. They could

bear this temporary obscuration, because they knew that the manifestation was sure to come. How long the world would wait for this glory they did not know, nor could they comprehend the way in which the revelation of his divine royalty would take place, nor did they fully understand "the manner of the kingdom" which he would set up; but the fact that he was to be the Lord and Leader of men, that his name was yet to be above every name, they believed with all their hearts.

Perhaps this concealment of himself from the world was part of what our Lord meant in that word of his just before his crucifixion: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." It was not, perhaps, merely his death upon the cross to which he referred; it was the whole period of his humiliation, and that was not ended by his resurrection from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea; it is not ended yet. There were to be, as he well knew, long centuries of obscuration, before his glorious character should fully appear, and his kingdom on the earth be fully established.

"The Life was manifested and we have seen it," is the triumphant announcement of the apostle John. Yes, it *was* manifested. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotton Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." But John puts

this, already, in the past tense. This manifestation was only for a brief space: suddenly the brightness faded, and the gracious personality that revealed God to man and man to himself passed beyond our sight. Clouds have received and hidden him; for the unveiling of his glory we must wait, but it is sure to come. This is the mental attitude in which we always find the apostles, after our Lord's departure from the earth. "We know that he shall be manifested," — this is what they are always saying. As to the manner of his manifestation their ideas were dim and somewhat childish; that which was literal and material was mingled in their minds with that which was essential and spiritual, and there have been many in all the ages since who have seized upon their literal and material errors and have failed to grasp the spiritual and essential truth with which these errors were blended.

May we not with entire safety assert that it is the spiritual and essential Christ, rather than the physical Christ, whose concealment from the world is most to be deplored, whose revelation to the world is the chief object of desire? Is the presence in this world of a physical frame in which the spirit of Christ is incarnated, a consummation as devoutly to be prayed for as the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ in the church which is his body? If any intelligent Christian could by his choice secure

the one or the other of these good things, which would he wisely choose? Which would the Lord himself counsel us to pray for? We may answer this question more intelligently if we recall what he said, just before his departure; that it was expedient for him to go that the Comforter might come; in other words, that his spiritual presence was far better for the world than his physical presence.

His physical presence could be visible to no more than a small fraction of the world's population. With all the facilities for communication that the world now possesses, it would be simply impossible for one in a hundred of the dwellers on this planet ever, during their natural lives, to obtain a glimpse of the body in which the Lord might dwell. And those who thus beheld him would not all find profit in the sight. The proneness of men to dwell upon that which is external would be likely to find in this experience a striking illustration. "Man looketh on the outward appearance." It is an inveterate habit, and comparatively few of the children of men ever go any deeper. In Christ's time the people thought more about his personal peculiarities than about his message. John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking, and they said that he had a devil; Christ came eating and drinking, and they called him a glutton and a winebibber. It was not by the character nor by

the doctrine that they judged either of them, but by the mere external features of their life. You will observe, to-day, that three fourths of the people who criticise a public teacher are more concerned about his gestures, his elocution, his manner, than they are about what he has to say. What such people would be thinking about if they saw Christ in the flesh it is easy to conjecture. It is expedient for you, he said, that I go away. You yourselves will never understand me, the spiritual power of my life will not appear to you, while I am with you in the flesh.

It is not, then, I say, the hiding of his physical presence that we have chiefly to deplore; for that, as he himself has told us, is gain rather than loss to us. But his spiritual presence is also, in large measure, hidden. The mind of Christ, the heart of Christ, the life of Christ, how dimly have they appeared to the church through all the centuries! The world knows more of them than it would have known if he had been here in the flesh, yet how little it knows! May we not say that until this hour, the Son of man has been very imperfectly revealed, even to the best of his disciples? We have the story of Christ in the gospels; we have the words that he spoke, in part, and the recital of many of his deeds of love and power; but, with this story in their hands, how many even of the masters and the teachers have ever seen the real Christ?

Had Christ been adequately revealed to the men of the early church who taught that his atonement was a clever trick by which he outwitted the devil? Read the account of that transaction as you find it described by many of the old church fathers, and judge whether they had ever fully discerned the character of Christ. Was he fully revealed to the men who have taught that he came to save a select few out of the innumerable millions of hopeless human beings, letting the rest go down to eternal burnings, without putting forth an effort to succor them? Was he clearly known to the men who taught that he, as the Judge of all the earth, would condemn to everlasting woe children dying in infancy, whose only fault was their descent from Adam? Has he been fully revealed to those who conceive that he is satisfied with rescuing a portion of the race from sin and ruin and taking them away to heaven, while he leaves this world to wax worse and worse continually, and finally to be consumed with fire? Have those sectarians who shut one another out of fellowship, and wage destructive rivalries in their zeal for notions which never entered into his mind, ever truly known him? To the millions of persecuting Catholics on the one hand and of persecuting Protestants on the other, arrayed against one another in deadly enmity, has the true character of the Master they profess to serve ever been made known?

Might we not say that the whole period of Christian history is little more than a record of the obscuration of Christ? Some elect souls in all the ages have discerned his true character, and have fully entered into his life: and something of his grace and truth have come to the great multitude of those who have professed his name. There has never been a total eclipse of his glory; his light has been always shining, and bountiful and beautiful have been the fruits that have grown from even this imperfect illumination. The men who taught those horrible doctrines were far better men than their theories would have made them; the sectarians of to-day, by a happy inconsistency, are often kind and brotherly. But, after all, the true confession of Christ's church until this hour must be, "Now we see as in a blurred mirror dimly." The promise, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty," is not yet fulfilled.

What is the reason of this imperfect revelation of Christ to his followers? It can be no other than the reason which hindered his disciples from understanding him while he was here. How often he was compelled to complain of their lack of apprehension. The light shone in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.

To one who is destitute of sight, the brilliancy of noon, the gorgeousness of sunset, the splendor of the starry firmament, make no appeal. The glory is

there, but the power to behold it is wanting. How could the spiritual beauty, the moral sublimity of Jesus Christ, be revealed to a man like Pilate, or even to such an undeveloped moral nature as that of Peter? Something above them they all saw in him; something that affected them strangely; something that made Pilate tremble, and that kindled a wondering admiration in the breast of the fisherman apostle; but, after all, how far away he was from the thoughts of the best of them!

In all the ages since, the same thing has been true. "If our gospel is veiled," says the apostle, "it is veiled in them that are perishing, in whom the God of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they should not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." How can the crude, hard, unspiritual, selfish mind comprehend the perfect truth, the perfect purity, the perfect love of Jesus Christ?

Could the boy to whom long division is a task and percentage a mystery enter into the thrilling significance of Newton's "Principia," if its propositions and formulas were read over to him ever so distinctly? Could the average child of ten discern the kindling eloquence of an essay by Emerson or Ruskin, or the deep meaning of Browning's "Death in the Desert?" Spiritual things are discerned only by the spiritual: there must be some preparation of heart for the revelation of the divine hu-

manity. The real reason why Christ has been hidden from the world is that the world's power of beholding his glory and receiving the revelation of his divinity has been very limited.

But there is another truth here that must not be missed. The unspiritual mind fails of comprehending the brightness of his glory, yet the steady shining of this glory upon the unspiritual mind tends to awaken in it some power of apprehension. Christ cannot fully manifest himself to those who have little in common with him, but some points of contact with the lowest of them he finds, and he shows them all that they are able to receive, and by this means their power of apprehending him is gradually increased; he gives them all he can of his fullness, and though their receptivity is at first very small, it slowly enlarges; the more they receive the more they are able to receive. Nursery jingles are well enough for a baby whose ear is being trained to rhythm and melody; but if you want his mind to grow, something with more meaning in it must soon be substituted, and it is well if the food provided for the mind be a little above the mind's present powers, something to pique its curiosity and challenge its understanding. We often injure our children's minds by reading down to them and talking down to them; intellects as well as affections are born from above. Give people good music, and although at first they may not greatly enjoy it,

every time they hear it it will mean more to them; it will create in them a taste for its own excellence; by and by they will not be able to tolerate the trashy melodies which once they preferred.

The operation of this law of mind is familiar enough. The nature is stimulated, vitalized, developed by influences that come down upon us from above. The high calling of God in Christ Jesus is really an upward calling, a call from above to come up higher. Thus it is that though, because of our own unspiritual conditions, the manifestation to us of the Divine Humanity is always partial and obscure, yet there is something in us that is fitted to respond to this influence; and if our wills consent, and we do not perversely quench the light, our eyes are gradually opened that we may behold more and more of his glory.

A striking similitude of the spiritual law we are now considering is found in the evolution of the eye. That function which we call sight exists in very different degrees, in different orders of living creatures. In some of the lower orders there is nothing more than a mere pigment spot on the surface somewhere that is more sensitive to light than other portions of the body. These eye-spots or eye-specks are somehow adapted to the light; the light affects them; and the creature becomes aware through them of the difference between darkness and light. This is the beginning of vision.

But as the light acts on these sensitive points, and they respond to its action, they become more and more sensitive to its influence; the tissues are changed in such a way that the light has more and more affinity for them, and gradually the eye is formed. The history of this process can be read in the developing forms of the animal creation. It is a marvelous history. Through it all we see these two agencies coöperating; the surface tissues that were made for the light, and the light that was made for the tissues; under the stimulus of the sun's rays the visual rudiments of the sensitive creature rouse themselves to action, assemble and organize themselves, and gradually become capable of performing that wonderful function which we call sight.

Is there not something like this in the gradual revelation of the Light of the World to the World that waits for the Light? The degrees of spiritual vision in human beings are as various as the capacities of sight among living creatures. There are some whose power of discerning spiritual things is about as feeble as the visual power of the cœlenterates and the echinoderms. They feel a difference between light and darkness, between good and evil, but they can hardly be said to possess vision. Others, like some of the worms and snails, begin to exhibit the rudiments of a visual organ; others, like the mollusks, are able to see with considerable

distinctness. Yet in the lowest of these mortals there is some affinity for the light, some power of response to the divine Humanity. And the love of God in Christ, imperfectly revealed as it must be to these imperfectly developed spiritual organs, nevertheless tends to arouse in them a craving for a fuller revelation, and to stimulate and invigorate the power of sight. And thus the Love that was incarnate in Jesus Christ has been seeking, through all the ages, to disclose itself more and more fully to the men who need it, and are suffering for the lack of it. He has been hidden from them by their own infirmity, yet that infirmity his love ceaselessly seeks to overcome. Though the darkness could not comprehend the light, the light by its own persistent shining has awakened in the darkness some power of apprehension. Thus the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; it not only waits to give us the good things we ask for, but it silently steals into our hearts and prompts us to ask for them. Christ is hidden from us because our eyes are dim, but the touch of his loving finger is upon our eyes to quicken the power of sight that so we may discern him.

There is one thing more to remember, namely, that this grace which helps us to receive can only act in harmony with our free choice. The light cannot create in us the power of vision, unless we are willing to see. Our perverse choices may shut this influence out of our lives.

I can follow this thought no further, but have we not discovered what is the reason of the concealment from ourselves and from the world of the spiritual presence of Christ? Is not the dullness of our own spiritual vision the explanation of it all?

And is there any better thing that you or I could hope for than the manifestation of Christ, the spiritual and essential Christ to us and to our fellow men? Suppose that the power could come to us of apprehending his real character, his real nature; of appreciating him, in some adequate degree; of entering into his feelings and wishes; of taking his view of life and of human destiny; of standing with him by the couch of the sick, amidst the throngs of sufferers, in the slums of the cities, by the graves of the dead; of going down with him into the darkness of Gethsemane; of ascending with him the mount of transfiguration; would not this revelation to us of the real Christ have in itself a mighty transforming power? If we could see him as he is, should we not be like him?

And suppose that to all the world this glory could be revealed, the glory of his purity and truth, his gentleness and grace, his patience and his courage; the glory of a soul that is strong enough to love its enemies, to do good to those that hate and to pray for those that persecute; the glory of a life that finds its gain in giving and its joy in ministering; the glory of a kingdom whose only law is

love; suppose we could only see what is true, that this, *this* is the glory that excelleth; suppose that to this emulous, jealous, pushing, clamoring, roaring world there could come a vision of the Prince of Peace, and a vision of the fruitfulness and beauty that his reign would bring, — some clear revelation of what would happen if the spirit of Christ should enter into the hearts of all men, and if his love should become the law of their society, — what a sudden hush would fall upon all this clamor, and then what an anthem of praise would rise, murmurous and sweet, then mighty and reverberant, like the voice of many waters! The day is coming when his beauty shall be unveiled; every sunrise brings it nearer; some glimpses of the glory even now we see. It only remains for us to prepare the way for its coming; to lift up the gates and open wide the doors, that the King of Glory may come in.

XIII

THE EARTHY AND THE HEAVENLY

As we have borne the image of the earthy, let us also bear the image of the heavenly. — 1 Cor. xv. 49.

The image of the earthy is that which is stamped upon us by our contact with the earth ; it represents the elements which find expression in a purely sensuous life. I do not say sensual, I say sensuous, — the life which has its springs in the senses and in that which appeals to them ; the life which finds its chief good in *things*, of one sort or another. They may be things which please the palate, — delicious viands, pleasant flavors, stimulating draughts ; or things that are grateful to the touch, like soft surfaces and velvety carpets and luxuriant couches ; or things that charm the sight, like gems and silks and feathers and flowers, and tasteful furniture and elegant upholsteries ; or things that minister to our physical comfort and delight in many ways, like fine houses which give us shelter in spacious and pleasant rooms, or carriages which bear us swiftly and smoothly along attractive highways, giving us the charm of easy motion and satisfying the eye at every moment with

changing scenes; they may be things of beauty or they may be things of magnitude, — things which express the sense of largeness, of mastery, of power; great warehouses stored with merchandise; great factories filled with machinery, and sending forth a constant stream of things, — wares of all descriptions for human uses; or they may be things like bank notes or checks or mortgages or bills payable, which are simply the representatives of things, — orders for things; in things of some kind, they who bear the image of the earthy find their chief good; it is in things that their lives culminate; things which their senses can in some way appropriate and use. Thus their life is rooted and grounded in the earth.

What shall we say about this kind of life? We must be careful to say no extravagant things about it. It must not be inferred, to begin with, that there is anything essentially evil in the gratification of the senses. The pleasures of sense are essentially good. In the satisfaction of the natural bodily cravings, in the enjoyment of palatable viands and draughts, in the sweet odors of the springtime, in colors and forms that ravish the eye and the sounds that delight the ear, there is a good that belongs to us, and of which some of us perhaps do not know so much as we ought to know.

David's first song to Saul, in Browning's poem, was a praise of these delights of sense: —

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! no spirit feels waste;
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing, nor sinew unbraced;
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold-dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher; the full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
The heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!"

And not the imaginary David, alone, but the real Psalmist, in the Psalter, tells us many things about the joys of sense. He says that one reason for believing that God is good is the fact that he satisfies our mouth with good things; that he feeds us with the finest of the wheat and with honey out of the rock. The ascetic view of life finds little countenance in the Bible. It tells us that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and that this fullness is for his children.

"He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
And herb for the service of man,
That he may bring food out of the earth,
And wine that maketh glad the heart of man,
And oil to make his face shine,
And bread that strengtheneth man's heart."

The things that are round about us are here for our

use; we live among them and upon them; we cannot live in this world without them. From the first to the last moment of our earthly existence we are dependent on things; we cannot spurn the earth; we must walk upon it, and build our houses and our temples on it, and utilize its products for our subsistence, and organize its forces for our service, and partake of its pleasantness and its beauty for our refreshment and delight. Thus it is that we are vitally related to the world of sense; our roots run down into it and our life is drawn from it; we are not to despise it but frankly and joyfully to use it.

Entering into this life so fully as we needs must do, we must bear the impress of it. And this the apostle, in the argument from which the text is taken, fully recognizes. We are not pure spirits, we are also creatures of flesh and sense. The two elements blend inseparably in our experience. We inherit our life from Mother Nature and from the Father of Spirits. "Howbeit," he says, "that is not first which is spiritual but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, let us also bear the image of the heavenly."

There is a little question here whether the right reading of the last verb is in the present subjunc-

tive or the future indicative; following the margin I have taken the subjunctive reading, which makes the sentence an exhortation rather than a prophecy, — "*Let us* also bear the image of the heavenly," instead of "*we shall* also bear the image of the heavenly." The meaning is not essentially changed. And the meaning is that while we inherit from our human ancestry that part of our nature by which we are allied to earth, there is a higher nature of which we are also inheritors, and which is indeed our superior inheritance, which is not dependent upon the earth, but which draws its life from higher sources. Adopting the Adamic allegory as the true symbol of our origin, the apostle traces our ancestry back to the first man, who was autochthonous — sprung from the earth; but he finds in us another strain also represented by the second Adam, — the man who came down from heaven, and who brings into our lives another kind of forces and influences. "The first Adam became a *living soul*, — [and by soul Paul always means the lower intelligence, that whose life is in the senses]; the last became a *life-giving spirit*."

I think that we have here the clear distinction between the two constituent elements of our human nature. The man who springs from the ground, the man whose life is in his senses, the man whose ruling interests is in things is *a living soul;* the man whose inspiration comes from above, whose

life centres not in things of sense but in things of which the senses cannot take cognizance, — is a *life-giving* spirit.

The distinction is also marked here by the words natural and spiritual, but natural is a very misleading word when used to represent Paul's conception. "Psychical" is his term; and the psychical life is with him the life of the lower part of the nature, — the sensuous life.

The characteristic of this psychical or sensuous life is that it is self-centred, absorbent; it attracts to itself the good which ministers to it; it receives, but it does not impart. The pleasures that come to me through my senses are pleasures for me, but I cannot share them. The enjoyment that I have in palatable viands is mine alone. My delight in soft surfaces and balmy airs and grateful odors I cannot communicate. Sensuous good is good that culminates in the life of him who receives it, it is for him, and for him alone. It ministers to his strength; it increases his life and happiness, but he cannot give it away. The first Adam is a living soul. He has life after its kind; he receives life, such as he has; he enjoys life according to his capacity, but it ends in him.

The characteristic of the other kind of life is that it is expansive, outflowing, ministering. The second Adam is a life-giving spirit. The spiritual life is not absorbent, it is radiant. Through my

appetites I enjoy what comes into my life; through my affections I enjoy what goes out of my life.

Now the apostle's argument here is simply this: we are all of us inheritors of both these kinds of life, the sensuous and the spiritual. We must all employ the senses, and deal with things which minister to and gratify the senses. The impress of this material world is stamped on us, and we shall bear it as long as we live. But let us not forget that there is a higher kind of life, of which we are heirs, and into the full enjoyment of which we ought to enter. Through our inheritance from Adam we became living souls; through our union with the second Adam we ought to become life-giving spirits. To bear the image of the earthy is just to get life, to have it, to enjoy it: to bear the image of the heavenly is to impart it, to pour it out in a constant stream of life-giving ministry.

Now the apostle does not mean, of course, that this distinction between men is one by which they can be exactly and infallibly classified, so that those who live the life of sense can all be ranged on one side of a line, and those who live the life of the spirit all on the other; for there is none of us so spiritual that he is not for a good part of his life more or less immersed in the things of sense, and there are few of us, I dare say, so absorbed in the things of sense that spiritual interests and realities do not sometimes strongly appeal to us. But the question

is, after all, which of these principles rules in our habitual conduct. Which is the controlling force in our lives? Is it inward, in self-aggrandizement, or outward, in ministry, that the strong tides of our being flow? In the ruling choices of our lives, are we living souls or life-giving spirits? It is a tremendous question — none can be more searching, and the answer to it involves vast consequences. For although these two strains of tendency must meet and mingle in every human life, they are not of equal strength and purity: one of them is a river of living water and the other will soon run dry. This is not a truth of revelation, merely; it is the plainest fact of every-day observation. We all know that the life whose chief good is in the things of sense cannot keep its chief good very long. The end of all that is coming very soon to every one of us. The senses are functions of these bodies of ours, which are not going to endure. All these things that minister to sense, the things on which our hearts are set, in which our joys are found, will soon be beyond our reach. If our life centres here, in this realm of material things; if our interests are here, if our treasures are laid up here, we shall soon be very poor indeed. What a tragedy death must be to a man whose *life consists* in the abundance of the things which he possesses! Suppose he gets the whole earth: he cannot keep it very long. And he has nothing else. I heard a man the other night ap-

plauding those who wanted the earth and sneering at those who said that they did not want it. Well, if a man wants it so much that he has little room in his life for anything that is not of the earth earthy, the time is not far off when he will wish that he had wanted something else. For the earth, if he gets it all, will not remain in his grasp many days. That is a scientific fact which nobody is likely to dispute. And it does appear to be at least possible that he might get hold of something worth having which he could keep a little longer.

"He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." That is the statement in which this same apostle elsewhere sums up the alternatives of the sensuous life and the spiritual life; the life which is in the image of the earthy and the life which is in the image of the heavenly. The one perishes and the other endures. Selfishness returns to dust; love alone is eternal.

What is the true relation between these two phases of our experience? It is that the one is a preparation for the other. The sensuous life is the first stage in our development; it serves an excellent purpose when it is regarded as provisional and transitional, when we use its resources to fit us for entrance into the larger life of the spirit toward which it is meant to lead us. So long as it is a

means to an end it is good; as soon as it becomes an end itself it is corrupting and accursed.

One stage of life is often conditional for and preparatory to another; we begin on one plane, with one set of surroundings and incentives, that we may make ready to ascend to a higher plane, and to use the powers we have gained in a new element.

The balloon is constructed and inflated on the earth, but it is meant to navigate the air. It could not possibly be built in the air, it must be built on the earth; but as soon as its structure is completed and it is ready for the fulfillment of its function, it must leave the earth. It cannot be used as a vehicle upon our city streets or along our country roads; it lives and moves in another element; to drag it on the ground is to destroy it.

The ship also must be built upon the land. By no possibility could it be constructed in the air or on the water. The materials of which it is built are drawn from the earth, not from the water; the tools with which it is built are taken from the earth; through all the period of its construction it rests on the solid land. But the purpose for which it is constructed is only fulfilled when it leaves the land and moves down into the water. From that time onward the less it has to do with the land the better. It lives and moves and has its being in that other element for which, while it was on the land, it was being fashioned.

Suppose that its builders had concluded to leave it upon the land. It would have been absolutely worthless then. All the costly materials incorporated in its structure would have been wasted. It would have rusted and rotted there upon the stocks, an unsightly deformity.

Now there is something quite similar to this in our human experience. We are to get our training and preparation here upon the earth for the life of the spirit. It is in our use of the things of this world that we are to find out that we have interests which are superior to things, interests which things cannot satisfy. It is the conviction which reason forces upon us of the inadequacy of the sensuous life which opens to us the realm of the spiritual.

I do not know that we could learn this lesson under any other kind of schooling. I suppose that such creatures as we are must first bear the image of the earthy, in order that we may be fitted to bear the image of the heavenly. But the value of this phase of our life is in the clear recognition of the fact that it is provisional, transitional; that it furnishes us not the end of life but the means to an end; that we are not to stop in it, but to go on through it to something higher and diviner; that as the air-ship is made on the earth to mount into the sky, as the steamship built upon the land is to sail the mighty ocean, so we are getting our schooling in the use of the things of sense that we may

be able to live the life of the spirit; we are fitting our souls on the shores of time to sail the eternal seas.

Keep this truth in mind, busy men and women. It is the one truth you cannot afford to forget. Live in the midst of the things of this world you must; in handling them you get your discipline. If you appraise them at their proper worth, if you hold them always subject to the claims of the spiritual order, if you learn, in the use of them, to make them serve the interests of the life eternal, it will be well with you. But if you come to live in them and for them, to make them ends and not instruments, it will be ill with you.

"Let us use this world," says Paul in this same epistle, "as not abusing it." That is the old version. The new version says, "as not *using it to the full*." That is nearer the meaning of the word. Let us use the world as not over-using it, — as not making it our all in all. Let us learn how to grasp it firmly, and easily to let it go; how to hold and appropriate its goods without letting them cling to us and grow into our lives; how to rise upon them and push them behind us as the strong swimmer spurns the waves, making them the fulcrum of his power, instead of being enveloped by them and drawn down to death. Let us use the world, as not using it to the full, and why? Because, says Paul, "the fashion of the world passeth away." Ah, yes; it is

a fatal folly to wreak our souls on that which is and must be ephemeral, upon things which perish with the using.

Fellow men, you all know perfectly well that if there is anything which endures it is not that which bears the image of the earthy. Nothing that you can handle or feel or taste or see is going to last very long. Nothing that is bought or sold in the market, nothing that can be covered by a title deed or a certificate of ownership will be in your possession many days. Suppose that these things of time and sense make up your life, furnish your incitements and your interests, what will your life amount to when the darkness falls and they are forever out of sight? What is a man's life worth when all the things that he cares for and is interested in are stripped away from him forever?

If there is anything that lasts it must be those other elements of character which we call the spiritual elements. They do not spring out of the earth, and there is no reason for believing that they return to the earth. Love, truth, honor, purity, fidelity, reverence, — such qualities as these seem to have no relation to the material world. If your life finds its organizing principle in such qualities as these, you may have good hope that it will endure. These things ought to last; they seem to be imperishable; it is difficult for us to conceive how they could cease to be. If your character bears in all its larger

lineaments the image of the heavenly, you may safely trust that when the end of the earth shall come, and the dulled senses drop their perishing delights, and the things for which men toil and strive slip from your nerveless hands, this corruptible will put on incorruption and this mortal immortality, and to you will be verified the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory!"

XIV

THE TRANSFORMING SPIRIT

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. — 1 Cor. xii. 4-6.

The power of the spirit to express itself, to incarnate itself in beautiful and fruitful forms of life — this is the thought now before us. It is the nature of spirit — the function of spirit, we may say — to mould the substances with which it deals into manifold forms of its own choosing: it is plastic, in the active sense; it is artistic; it is architectonic; it is creative. When the spirit does its perfect work upon the human material, it brings forth a great variety of beautiful products.

Paul has been thinking of the work of the divine spirit in the lives of men, and he points out the many forms of excellent character and function in which it issues. It makes one man a seer, and another a philosopher, and another a mystic, and another a healer of disease, and another a conqueror of nature, and another a mind-reader, and another a linguist, and so forth and so forth: the wonderful thing is that its manifestations are so diverse;

that it finds so many types in which to express itself. Variation, — that is the great first word of the spiritual as of the biological realm.

Perhaps we shall find our way more readily into the heart of the truth we are seeking to understand, if we follow the paths of life. We do know a great deal about life; and all life is, in a very real sense, a manifestation of God. Biology is the vestibule of theology. There is much in the higher spiritual realm which cannot be explained by the analogies of physical life, and therefore it is vain to try to apply the formularies of natural law to all the processes of the spiritual world; it is like trying to explain the phenomena of life by the laws of mechanics or of chemistry. The mechanical and chemical forces are subsumed and used by the powers of life; but biology deals with other than mechanical and chemical phenomena. Just so the spiritual life takes up into itself and transfigures the physical processes, adding other and higher elements. But since all life is of God, the study of any life may help us toward an understanding of the highest.

Note, then, the manifold nature of those phenomena which we classify under the name of living things. Here, indeed, the diversities of operations are marvelous. From the mildew that grows upon your garments, from the midgets that fly in the sunbeams, from the infusoria which sail their fleets in a drop of water, to the grasses, and the herbs,

and the mighty trees, and the creeping things, and the insects and the birds, and the beasts that fill the pastures and roam the jungles, and the monsters that play in the deep, what a wonderful variety do we find in the wide kingdoms of life! Yet there seems to be a property common to all these living things. The scientific people may insist that we know nothing about it; that we have no right to talk about any *principle of life*, or to claim for living things any different kind of power from that which belongs to things not living. "It is now almost universally admitted," says Dr. Carpenter, "by intelligent physiologists, that we gain nothing by the assumption of some general controlling agency, or vital Principle, distinct from the organized structure itself; and that the laws of life are nothing else than general expressions of the conditions under which vital operations take place."

But whatever truth there may be in this, it is certain that things which are alive act differently from things which are not alive. And the gist of the difference is thus expressed in question and answer by one of the latest writers on physics: "What is the distinction between what is called living and dead matter? One is *able to transform energy for its maintenance*, and the other seems to be wholly inert."

Life, then, possesses this power of transforming the substances which it touches. Wherever you find life you find a process of transformation going for-

ward, old things passing away, all things becoming new. When the living germ is wakened to activity, it immediately begins to lay hold on the materials within its reach and to change them into something else. The embryonic life hid in the kernel of maize takes up first the food that is packed for the first stage of its progress in the kernel itself, changing that into living tissue; then it reaches out into the mould and up into the atmosphere and the sunlight, and lays tribute on all these elements, drawing their compounds into its laboratories, and submitting them to its magical analyses, so that these crude, non-living substances are changed into its own forms of life; so that the sordid earth, and the noisome compost, and the unvital moisture and the wayward air are all combined to make the broad green leaf-blade, and the firm stalk, and the waving tassel, and the ear with its tuft of dainty silk. Out of these untoward materials life, by its magic transforming power, produces such wonderful creations as these. There is nothing, the chemists say, in the plant which was not before in the earth and the water and the air and the light; but see what has come forth, at the touch of life, from these non-living substances! Work akin to this is going on continually, all over the face of the earth. The tiniest organic germ has some power to change the substances with which it comes in contact into something other than they are. Every smallest

plant or living creature is at work through the whole period of its existence, transforming the materials with which it enters into vital relations into new and higher forms of being. Thus we are brought, in the words of Dr. Bushnell, into that wide "field of wonders, where the lives are seen to be triumphing at every point over the chemical affinities of matter, acting each as a chemist in his own right, and constructing in this manner substances that under the mere laws of inorganic matter could never exist. All the animal and vegetable substances have thus an imposed chemistry, a chemistry, not in the matter as such, but put upon the matter by the lives working in it. Each life, in fact, has a chemistry of its own, and, coming down thus upon matter, it composes substances of its own."

It was a good many years ago that Dr. Bushnell ventured the suggestion that "all lives were immaterial, and have a soul-like nature," — combining this suggestion with an offer to conduct us into a marvelous world, "where creatures busy as angels and like them invisible save by their works, are ever employed in building, repairing, actuating, and reproducing these multiform bodies; with a power over matter and all chemical affinities as affinities of matter, which is only the more sublime that it appears to be a sovereignty from without, superior to all forces within."

Thus life is ever more at work, all over the

globe, changing substances into new and higher forms; producing, from the crude materials of the earth's crust, and from the air that envelops it, and from the sunlight that warms it, all the manifold types of being that grow from the soil or swim in the water or float in the air or walk upon the earth, from the microscopic mite up to godlike man.

There is another side to this picture, however, on which we must not fail to look. It is true that life has the power of transforming all these non-living materials; is it not equally true that they have the capacity of being transformed by life? The great magician lays his spell upon them, and they yield to his sorcery. Are not these substances made to be thus transfigured and glorified? If it is the mission of the higher forms of existence to change those beneath them into their own image, and thus to lift them up and bear them on from strength to strength and from glory to glory, is it not also the mission of the humbler forms to yield themselves to this regenerating influence?

How, indeed, can either exist without the other? How can plants grow without soil and moisture and the fertilizing elements? How can living things exist without the contribution made to their sustenance by non-living substances? There can be no transforming life, unless there are things not living which wait to be transformed.

Such, then, is the relation of that mysterious

power which we call life to the non-living universe. Living creatures enter into relations with non-living substances in order to recreate them, to lift them up into their own image, to introduce them into a new realm, to make them part of themselves. Between the living and the non-living there is a wonderful correlation: each seems to be made for the other; neither can realize its possibilities without the other.

If now we ascend to the realm of the spirit, what shall we find? It may be well to keep in mind the fact that what we call the spirit is simply a form of life. "If Christ be in you," said Paul, "the body is dead because of sin, but *the spirit is life* because of righteousness." The spirit is life. The man who is most perfectly under the influence of the spirit, whose nature is instinct with that highest principle of human conduct which Paul calls righteousness, — this man is thoroughly alive. It seems to be hardly necessary to stop to prove this to anybody who believes even the elementary truths of religion. If God is our Father and we are made in his image, then we are spirits because he is a Spirit; manhood is essentially a spiritual thing; the perfection of manhood is a spiritual perfection; and the man who is most completely dominated by spiritual influences is most thoroughly a man, which is only another way of saying that life in its fullness belongs to him.

But what do we mean by spiritual influences?

Here, again, the Scripture definitions will help us to a clear conception. God is a Spirit, said Jesus. God is love, said his best beloved disciple. If things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other, then the life of the Spirit is simply the life of love; a spiritual man is a man whose life is inspired by love to God and man; spiritual influences are the influences which tend to bring men under the sway of the law of love; and a spiritual life is a life which finds expression in words and deeds of love.

Now this kind of life, like the physical life whose laws we have been studying, is a mighty magician, with wonderful transforming energies. Indeed, it is this higher element, hid in the heart of all the lives of the world, that gives to them their transforming power. The changes which life is constantly producing in macrocosm and microcosm have their origin in love. Is it not the whole work of life, even in the physical world, to lift up, to refine, to beautify? Is not everything that it touches transformed into something higher, and is not this the work of love? So it comes to light that something closely akin to what we describe as the life of the spirit, which is love, is found in all the transfiguring work of the lives below us. This is the new light which is breaking forth from the latest scientific discoveries; this is the gospel which men like Drummond find in biology itself.

One of our hymns tells us that,

> "Beyond the vale of tears
> There is a life above,
> Unmeasured by the flight of years,
> And all that life is love."

But is it not true that there is a life less distant than that, a life round about us, even a life below us, of which we may say that the deepest thing in it is love; that we do not catch the real meaning of it until we discern love as its central and constructive element? Surely if God is in his world, — if that phrase has any real meaning, — if he is the Life of all that lives, then this must in some way be true. If this is true, then that true spiritual love which is the fulfilling of the law finds its type and prefiguration in the life of the lower orders which transforms all that it touches. The life of the spirit is really at heart the same kind of life as that which works in the realms below us, and it has the same kind of work to do, only higher and broader, and finer and diviner.

We, then, who have received in any measure this gift of life, may discern the function which we are called to fulfill. The life that is in us has a work of transformation to do. First, upon ourselves its vital energy will be exerted. There is much crude material in us that needs to be made over. "*Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds*," is the apostolic counsel. If the mind of

Christ be in us, this transformation will be all the while going forward. The thoughts of our minds, the wishes of our hearts, the purposes of our lives, will be subject to a silent process of renewal. Our tempers will become sweeter, our aims clearer, our ideals higher, as the days go by.

And the change will be seen, not only in our conduct, but in our faces, our personalities. When the spirit whose name is love becomes central in a man's life, it is apt to carve new lines upon his face, to transfigure his countenance, to ennoble his bearing. He who has seen the King in his beauty, and has gazed upon that glorious life till its full meaning has taken possession of his soul, is changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.

But this transforming work does not stop with the character in which it begins. The Christian's life is the principle of regeneration. The spirit of love in the lives of the followers of Christ is a living energy by which the characters of men and the whole social order may be changed. When we speak of the regeneration of men and of society as the work of the Spirit we often get the notion of some kind of abstract, atmospheric influence by which the work is done, but the truth is much simpler. It is in human lives that the Spirit chiefly reveals his regenerating power. It is love incarnate that most often convinces men of sin, and leads

them to holiness. It is the touch of a consecrated life that awakens the wish for higher living. It is the vital contact of men who have the life of the Spirit in them with those who are under the bondage of sense that sets the renewing power at work in their lives.

I have seen this marvel how often! the transfiguring touch of one life upon another; a life instinct with Christly love awakening by its very presence and contact new impulses, new ideals, new aims; changing by its silent charm the very texture and quality of the character brought under its power. And this, I suppose, is what our Christianity means. If there is any life in us, this is the kind of work it will be doing. It is the nature of life — more the nature of the life that we call spiritual than of any of the lower forms of life — to exert just this kind of power over all the characters with which it is brought into relations.

It is well to emphasize this last phrase. This life must be brought into relations, vital relations, with the characters which it is to transform. The acorn, the maple seed, the kernel of wheat have power to change the dull substances of the earth into forms of majesty and beauty; but they can work these changes only when they are brought into contact with the lower substances. Here is the seed, and here is the clod; the one can transform the other, but only when it comes down to its level

and buries itself by its side. Some humiliation and hiding of the higher life is necessary that the lower may be touched and vivified. Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. If we want to transform the characters round about us, we must not hold ourselves aloof from them, or lift ourselves above them. Life identifies itself with that which it transforms.

The truths which we are considering ought to be full of inspiration to all who find in their consciousness any signs of the love which is the fulfilling of the law. Is it not well for us to apprehend the true nature of this divine principle and the function which it is to fulfill? For it cannot be in any free intelligence a merely unconscious force; if the stirring of this impulse is God working in us, then we must be co-workers with him, or his work in us will avail nothing. But is it not a great thought that this principle of Christly love, when it gets possession of us, and becomes through our co-working the ruling power of our lives, has such a subtle energy in it to transform the characters of others? There is power here of which no words of mine can give any true account. There are resources in every loving heart which can only be computed in the arithmetic of heaven. Here is the little seedlet of the elm, falling into the ground: it seems feeble and insignificant, but what a mighty mass of earth

it will lift into the air and glorify within the next two hundred years! The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, working in any consecrated soul, is mightier far than this!

We sometimes conceive of this work of transformation as done for the benefit of the plant itself. "See," we say, "what the lily bulb has made of herself; what a glorious creature of God she has become!" But may we not think also of what the lily has done for the substances she has transformed, — for the clods she has regenerated and clothed with the beauty of God?

In one respect the analogy does not hold, for the plant in transforming this baser matter absorbs it into itself; but the loving spirit works this change upon the life with which it is brought into vital relations, not by absorbing it into itself, but rather by invigorating and enriching it; by confirming its individuality; by making the man thus wrought upon more truly himself than he ever was before.

So, then, to all of us, if any of the life of Christ is in us, is given this power of the Spirit, this power of lifting up unto newness of life the men and women who are round about us. To a Christly love this prerogative belongs. If we only love deeply and truly and bravely enough we can change the world. "Ama et fac quod vis," said Augustine: Love, and you can do what you will.

For these people round about us who need our

love are made to be loved; it is their nature to yield to the plastic power of love; not less surely do they respond to the call of a genuine affection than the earth responds to the call of the vitalizing germ. We can win them, we can save them, if we can only love them enough. How many there are, all about us, scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, the poor, the friendless, the degraded; men and women into whose lives no saving and inspiring influences come, who are cut off by their misfortune or their fault from all that could sanctify and uplift them, who are gradually sinking, under the dead weight of poverty and misery, into desolation and despair! And the miserable are not all poor! Many are there among the more fortunate classes whose lives are daily growing more sordid, more frivolous, more false; greed and luxury and selfish ambition are consuming their manhood and their womanhood. And what these sinking souls all need is love, nothing but love, the love that is life, the life that is love. If that kind of life is in us, with all its victorious energies, we can reach them and save them. Nothing can resist that power. What a work we could do, what victories we could win, if the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus were only the law of all our lives! What transformation we should see in the characters of the men and women round about us; what a change in the whole face of society! Suppose all the people in

this city who profess and call themselves Christians were full of the spirit of Christ, the spirit whose fruit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, meekness, self-control, the love that can stoop to the lowly, and suffer shame with the outcast, and bear injuries without resentment, and give itself freely for the rescue and deliverance of those who are perishing, how long would it be, think you, before the community would be regenerated? If we only knew what power there is in love! If we were only willing to trust it and try it! It is the one thing that we have never tried. We have tried almost everything else. We have tried to make people good by every kind of coercion, driving them into the church in the Middle Ages at the point of the bayonet; holding over them in modern times all sorts of prohibitive and restraining statutes; we have stormed their heads with all sorts of arguments; we have packed their brains with creeds and dogmas; we have allured them by sensuous rites and forms; we have threatened them with the terrors of hell; we have bribed them with the blessedness of heaven; and all our cunning schemes have given us but meagre results. I wonder if we shall not, by and by, find out that the world is to be saved, not by might nor by power nor by logic nor by ritual, nor by threats or promises, but by love. What wonders we shall see, when once this idea gets hold of the minds of men. What a change

will pass upon the life of all our cities! How quickly this purifying flood will cleanse the Augean stables of municipal misrule! How surely at the touch of its subtle energy the slums will be transformed into clean streets and happy homes! And it will not stop there. For the energy of this transfiguring life is yet to cleanse the whole world on which we dwell from the curse that yet impoverishes and pollutes it. The whole creation waits with earnest expectation for the revelation of the sons of God, — waits to be delivered from its bondage of barrenness and desolation into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. For when the Spirit is poured upon us from on high the wilderness shall become a fruitful field. The day is coming when there shall not be a desert, nor a jungle, nor a pestilence-breeding marsh in all this world; when fruitfulness and beauty and health and peace and plenty shall fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. Love, the love that springs from the heart of the All-Father, and that makes all men brothers, — resistless, victorious, all-subduing love will change the earth into the garden of the Lord, will make the dream of Eden an everlasting verity.

When will the people who bear the name of Jesus Christ begin to believe that the one all-compelling, overcoming, all-transforming power in this universe is the love that is life and the life that is love?

XV

THE EVERLASTING YEA

For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. — Eph. vi. 12, 13.

Just what St. Paul means by the several classes of adversaries which he here enumerates I do not know. The commentators propose various interpretations, more or less fanciful. It may be doubted whether the apostle himself could have given any scientific definition of them. His language sounds as if it were an attempt to deal with generalities that are somewhat vague, with realities that loom through the mists of human experience but have not yet been subjected to descriptive measurement. What he means to say is, that our adversaries are not visible and tangible entities, — that one great difficulty in dealing with them is in the fact that they are formless, flitting, elusive. They are "the principalities, the powers, the world rulers of this darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." They lurk in all the shadow

lands of our experiences; the regions which are sacred to high and reverent thought are not secure against them; even here they swarm in and take possession, paralyzing our prayers and clipping the wings of our aspiration. With these invisible and intangible foes, haunting doubts, spectral fears, questionings about the reality of goodness and the utility of virtue, our hardest battles must be fought.

These are the enemies which I should like to envisage with you this morning. Most of us, I dare say, have had some knowledge of them. They sometimes rise up, a portentous horde, and threaten to banish the greenness from the earth and the brightness from the sky. The question is how to deal with them. Are we at their mercy, or is it possible successfully to resist and vanquish them?

In answering this question it may be well to reflect that those who seem to have had the deepest insight into the meaning of life have always assumed that man is essentially a conqueror; that he is not, normally, in subjection to any form of evil; that when he realizes his true destiny he is not a menial or a slave but a master and a ruler over things. In each of those stirring messages to the churches which are preserved for us in the first chapter of the Book of Revelation, there is a promise to him that overcometh. It seems to be taken for granted that overcoming is the business of life; that no man accomplishes his destiny unless he overcomes.

Paul makes the same assumption in this text which we are studying. "That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." When the day is darkest, when the fight is hardest, when

> "the blasts denote
> We are nearing the place —
> The power of the night, the press of the storm,
> The post of the foe," —

when all the evil of the universe gathers itself together and hurls its squadrons against us, — then, in that evil day, we are to withstand, and having done all, and suffered all that the world and the flesh and the devil can bring down upon us, we are to stand. That is Paul's conception of the normal outcome of this conflict which he is describing.

Not a few of the great souls of earth have passed through this conflict and have believed themselves to have overcome. Whatever others may have thought about it, they themselves had the consciousness and the assurance that they were conquerors. They recognized the mastery of no principalities and no powers of evil; they stood, free and equal, under the blue canopy of heaven. Not to any exclusive creed or cult do these victors belong: Luther was one in whom the struggle was fiercest and the conquest most decisive; Bunyan had a deadly fight and won a signal victory; Tolstoy gives us a vivid account of his battle and of the

triumphant issue ; Carlyle met the enemy, in all his strength, and slept upon the field.

Nay, there is a more signal instance. For the Son of man himself, on the threshold of his ministry, encountered the world rulers of this darkness in a desperate combat and put them utterly to flight.

These are but illustrations of the truth that the true life is a victorious life ; that although the conflict may be fierce with many and mighty foes, the expectation with which we are equipped is the expectation that we shall overcome. Overcoming is our vocation. We must strive, but our strife is for mastery ; we must fight, but we fight to win. And not only in our wrestling with flesh and blood, with the material and palpable adversaries and obstacles that rise up in our own path, but in our contests with these subtler and more elusive foes of the spiritual realm we may be conquerors and more than conquerors.

What, now, is the real nature of this conflict of which we are thinking ? Is it not, essentially, the struggle for the mastery in our own natures between the spiritual and the carnal elements ? " Our Life, " says Carlyle, " is compassed about with necessity ; yet is the meaning of Life itself no other than Freedom, than voluntary Force ; thus have we a warfare ; in the beginning, especially, a hard-fought battle. For the God-given mandate, *Work thou in well-doing*, lies mysteriously written, in

Promethean, Prophetic Characters, in our hearts; and leaves us no rest, night or day, till it be deciphered and obeyed; till it burst forth in our conduct, a visible, acted Gospel of Freedom. And as the clay-given mandate, *Eat thou and be filled*, at the same time persuasively proclaims itself through every nerve — must there not be a confusion, a contest, before the better influence can become the upper?

"To me nothing seems more natural than that the Son of man, when such God-given mandate first prophetically stirs within him, and the clay must now be vanquished or vanquish, — should be carried of the Spirit into grim solitudes and there fronting the tempter do grimmest battle with him; defiantly setting him at naught till he yield and fly. Name it as we choose; with or without visible devil, whether in the natural desert of rocks and sands, or in the populous moral desert of selfishness and baseness, — to such temptation are we all called. Unhappy if we are not. Unhappy if we are but half-men, in whom that divine handwriting has never blazed forth in true sun-splendor, but quivers dubiously amid meaner lights, or smoulders, in dull pain, in darkness, under earthly vapors! Our wilderness is the wide world in an atheistic century; our forty days are long years of suffering and fasting."

This is the nature of the conflict before us, and

the question of questions is whether the God-given mandate, — the spiritual ideal which lays its commands upon us, — or the clay-given mandate — the craving of our lower selves — shall bear rule in our lives. The law of the members wars against the law in our minds. And this conflict finally reduces — in its deadliest phase, — to a subtle, insinuating doubt whether the things of the spirit are realities ; whether truth and honor and integrity and fidelity and purity and unselfishness and sympathy are not names rather than things ; whether, at any rate, they are worthy to be the supreme objects of the soul's desire. Sense fights against spirit by discrediting, in our thought, the things of the spirit. The things of sense you know very well : the food and drink that satisfies the palate, costly raiment, jewels, houses and lands, furniture and equipage, fine carriages stopping daily at your gate for visits of ceremony, footmen besieging your doors with engraved invitations, your name every week in the society column of the newspapers and somewhere near the head of the lists, smiles of recognition wherever you go from those whom the world esteems most fortunate ; money, to sum up all, with all that money will buy, — all these things are immediate, indubitable : you know that they exist ; you have a keen sense of their value ; you want them greatly for yourselves. And when it becomes a serious question whether you can have those spiritual

possessions, and gain and keep these, the grave doubt begins to be insinuated whether those, after all, are of supreme importance; whether indeed they are not shadows more than realities.

Thus this present world stands over us to challenge our spiritual choices, and to fill the corners of our minds with skepticism respecting the authority of those ideals to which we are seeking to be loyal. And it must be owned that our experience and our observation furnish us with reasons for such skepticism. When we look at what we can see about us in the world, outside of ourselves, we are not always able to discover clear evidence that the rewards of the life of the spirit are surer than the rewards of the life of sense. The people who are utterly loyal to spiritual ideals, who care more for truth and honor and purity and goodness than for money and promotion and social position — is the world as kind to them as to those who set their hearts on the things of sense? Are they apt to be as prosperous, and as popular, and as fortunate as those who frankly make material things supreme? I do not think so. Certainly it is far from being universally the case. It is not at all clear, when we look about us, that the spiritual forces are in the ascendant. At any rate, the present world is able to make out a strong case when it impugns the reality and the power of the things of the spirit.

Yet the man to whom the higher voices have

spoken does not readily assent to this judgment. "For the present," he says, "the flesh may prevail over the spirit, but finally, in the long run, the victory must lie with the higher powers, and those who have chosen the life of the spirit must win the good of the world."

But the mocking voices will tell him that this, too, is far from being the universal rule. Fidelity to truth, devotion to the higher ideals, often go utterly unrewarded with success and prosperity in the sight of men. Thousands and millions of those whose lives were loyal to the highest they knew, have gone to their graves in poverty and shame. Jesus, Paul, Socrates — what happened to them? If you are as faithful as they were to the inward light, your fate may be as tragical as theirs. This world has absolutely no guarantee of comfort and prosperity for those who hold truth and justice and love higher than gain and place and social recognition.

But the soul that cleaves to the higher good is not convinced. It still makes answer to the mocking voices: "This may indeed be true. But this life is not all. Death is not the end. For the great compensations we must wait. Eternity is before us, and there is time enough then, room enough there, for the vindication of life's ideals.

'The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,

Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard,
Enough that he heard it once; we shall hear it by and by.'"

Just here it is that the undertone of the mocking voices begins its insistent dismal questioning: "How do you know? What proof have you of any continuance of life after death? What does Nature say?

'Thou makest thine appeal to me?
I bring to life, I bring to death;
The spirit does but mean the breath;
I know no more.'

Is it not all a fond imagination, or a baseless tradition — this expectation that some unknown future is to give you the reward which the present withholds?

'For vain the tears for darkened years,
As laughter over wine,
And vain the laughter as the tears,
O brother, mine or thine;
For all that laugh and all that weep
And all that breathe, are one
Slight ripple on the boundless deep
That moves and all is gone.'

How do you know that there is any other life than that of which your senses testify? How do you know that there is any heaven to which you can hope to go, or any God in heaven to take your part? What is this faith of yours but an illusion, the sediment of ancestral dreams, the straw at which Humanity clutches as it drowns in the sea of nonentity? These ideals of yours do not repre-

sent realities. They are the mirage that rises above the desert of human existence; weariness and death are the portion of those who pursue them."

Such is the ever-droning doubt which pursues us and beleaguers us and fills the air with its miasmatic influence, and weakens the pinions of our hope, and despoils our virtue of its vigor. This is the conflict at which the apostle seems to be hinting, in which the human soul grapples with its deadliest foes.

What is our answer to these voices? Far too often it is an answer of weakness and despair. "If these things are so," men say, "what is the use of sacrificing peace and pleasure here for a good that can never be ours?

> 'Death is the end of life; ah, why
> Should life all labor be?
> Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
> And in a little while our lips are dumb.
> Let us alone. What is it that will last?
> All things are taken from us and become
> Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
> Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
> To war with evil?' . . .

Why should we not get all we can of the gains and joys of this present world? Why not follow the line of least resistance to the goods which are immediate and tangible. This present world is all we have to do with. Plainly it has no sympathy with our idealisms, no rewards for fidelity to our higher

aspirations; it is a thoughtless, lawless, loveless monster to which our loyalties are meaningless; let us dismiss our hopes and stifle our scruples; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

That is the answer that many men in this generation seem to be making to these mocking voices. But did any man ever make this answer, or in any wise assent to it, without feeling and knowing that in doing so he had suffered loss and degradation? Did any man ever attempt to adjust himself to that theory of life which these voices imply without a sense of guilt and shame? Reward or no reward, did any human being ever sacrifice the goods of the spirit to the goods of sense, honor to gain, truth to popularity, conscience to success, what he felt to be the higher to what he felt to be the lower satisfaction, without knowing that he had done a base and unworthy thing? It is the surrender, the weak and treacherous surrender of the law of the mind to the law in the members. It is the pulling down of the flag from the citadel of manhood. It is owning up that you are worsted in the battle of life, that you are no longer a free man, but the creature of circumstance, the puppet of caprice, the slave of things.

That is the surrender, my friends, which none of us can afford to make. Whatever else we win or lose we can hardly afford to lose ourselves. That is what it means to subordinate the spiritual ele-

ments in our nature to the carnal elements, to prefer things seen and temporal to things unseen and eternal, the shows of sense to the solidities of character. And for those who find themselves in the midst of this combat there is need of one firm and stern resolve, that, in the words of Professor Royce, "if the world [our world] will be tragic, it shall still, in Satan's despite, be spiritual." *Our* world shall be spiritual. The spiritual elements shall bear rule in it. Love and truth and purity and sincerity and goodness shall be things supreme. We will never for one moment admit that anything else can be worth as much as they are. We will not barter them for money or place or applause or social recognition. Whatever may happen to us in the present or the future, we will cleave unto these things which we know to be the essential things of our lives. We would rather die with these to-morrow than live a thousand years without them. You say that they are not realities. We say that nothing else is real. To know that you are determined to be true and upright and faithful; that you have no aims that are not just, no purposes that are not kind; that you are living, not to aggrandize yourself, but to help and serve your fellow men, — living to give as much as you can of time and thought and labor for the welfare of your fellows, — to have this consciousness in your heart is to be in possession of a reality far more positive and indubitable

and precious than any amount of material gain or of social recognition could possibly be. There is nothing so valid, nothing so inalienable as this inward assurance.

Your material goods and gains are by no means sure. The things which the senses crave the senses cannot keep. Riches take to themselves wings; moth and rust corrupt, thieves break through and steal; securities prove insecure; the popular gods are fickle; social recognition and leadership is always held by a precarious tenure; the senses themselves, through which all this kind of good is ministered, fail of their functions and refuse to supply our cravings. These things are not realities. But a clean heart, a just mind, a conscience void of offense, an unselfish habit, a love of service, a quick sympathy, a joy in all things true and beautiful and good — who can despoil you of these?

And these things of the spirit are not only inalienable, they are accessible. They are worth having, and you can have them if you will; none can hinder you. You can be clean and brave and unselfish and magnanimous; you can choose the things that are pure and honorable and manly and womanly; you can prefer these to all the goods of sense; if you want them more than anything else you will have them, and nothing in heaven or earth or hell can hinder you. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for *they shall*

be filled." Yea, verily; there is no contingency about it. The man who wants to be right more than he wants anything else, will be right. Nothing in this universe, not death itself, is more certain than this.

This is the point above all others, at which there needs to be perfect clearness. The infidelity that damns the soul starts right here. When a man begins to say in effect, "I am afraid that I am not able to do what I know to be right; the law in my members has got the better of me; it is no longer, as in Paul's case, a fight between the better and the worse; there has been a subjugation of the better by the worse; heredity and environment determine my conduct; I am a creature of the forces that play upon me; whichever way the currents of propensity and tendency bear me, that way I have to go; I must not be held strictly responsible for my evil choices," — when a man begins to talk like that, there is very little hope for him. He has stopped wrestling with the principalities and powers; he has gone over to them, and become their vassal.

There is, indeed, a certain sense in which a man is subject to the forces of heredity and environment. They may have distorted his ideals. Because of his inheritance, and his surroundings, he may think some things to be good which he ought to think evil; he may be guided in the ways of death. But when a man sees before him what seems to him a higher good, and what seems to him a lower

good, and has to choose between them, then the power to choose the higher does belong to him. He may find difficulty in realizing his choice; there may be a hard fight for him to win the higher good after he has chosen it; but he may set his heart upon it; he may make it his, and cling to it, and highly resolve that he will have it, come life or death, come heaven or hell. The power to do this is what makes him a man. It is just here that the battle of life is lost or won. And every man has the power to win it.

> "So close to grandeur is our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low 'Thou must,'
> The youth replies 'I can.'"

When, therefore, you have resolved, with Professor Royce, that "if your world will be tragic it shall still, in Satan's despite, be spiritual," you have resolved on nothing which is not within your power. And when the mocking voices tell you that you will be the loser if you make this choice, you will know how to answer them.

"You warn me," I hear you replying to them, "that fidelity to the highest that I know is not the path to gain and promotion in this world; that the powers which bear rule here are not friendly to the nobler purposes; and you say that there is no positive assurance of any other life but this. I do not admit your assertions; I think there are reasons

whose force you cannot understand, — reasons which have their strong foundations in the very kind of life from which you are seeking to dissuade me, — there and nowhere else. I do not believe that any man can be quite sure of God and immortality until he takes them both for granted and risks everything on the assumption that they both exist. It is faith, in all realms, under all conditions, that gives substance to things hoped for, and conviction of things not seen. It is living the life that implies God and immortality, which makes you sure of God and immortality, just as it is using and trusting any faculty which makes you sure that it can be trusted. I do not think that it is necessary to remain in doubt about God and immortality. I believe that some strong assurance of faith is possible, and I mean to win it. But admit your denials, and what then? Suppose there is no guarantee of worldly success and prosperity to him who chooses the higher good. Is not an upright mind, a pure heart, an unselfish purpose, worth more than any amount of worldly success and prosperity. Suppose that the loss of all things, even life itself, is the possible consequence of fidelity to the ideal; what is life worth when truth and honor and manhood are gone? Suppose that there is no guarantee of future compensation for present sacrifices of temporal good. Suppose that death does end all. Does that change the essential values? If this life is all, so much the greater

reason is there why this life should all be sound and clean and true. If this short span of years is all that is mine, let me make the most and the best of it. If death is the end, let me wear the fair flower of a stainless manhood unsmirched and unwithered to the very end. The goods of sense which you counsel me to choose cannot, on your own theory, be mine very long; why should I lower my standards of manhood to get such ephemeral things? Do you expect me to whine and sulk because others by intrigue and baseness and heartlessness have gotten possessions which I have failed to get, or have secured smiles and favors which to me have been denied? Nay, but mine is the better part. If I did not scorn to change places with them I should be as base as they. The things for which they have bartered their souls are not realities; the only goods of whose worth I am absolutely sure are those goods of the spirit which are mine, of which no man can rob me, and for which I am ready to suffer the loss of all things."

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. And it is, primarily, faith in the reality and the supremacy of the things of the spirit in our own lives, — faith in the heaven that is in us now. He who feels that the world is well lost, if only these can be held fast, has got the world under his feet.

When that victory is won, the spaces soon widen

about him, and the sky clears over his head. If truth is immortal, if love is deathless, then his life is anchored in reality. If such things cannot die, and if his life is centred in these things, then his life is secure. He is living the eternal life, and he is living it now, a life over which death has no power. He has fought the good fight, he has kept the faith and he knows that he has won the crown of life.

XVI

SPIRITUAL LAW IN THE NATURAL WORLD

And when even was come, the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food. But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves and two fishes. And he said, Bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat and were filled; and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And they that did eat were about five thousand men, besides women and children. — MATT. xiv. 15–21.

I DO not wish to discuss with you this morning the miraculous features of this narrative. Suppose I should convince you that this thing here described could not have happened: what value would there be in that demonstration? Suppose that I should convince you that it did happen; how much would that help you? You, at least, have no expectation that anything of the sort will ever happen to you. Loaves are never going to be multiplied in your larder by miracle. It is only by labor that the supply can be maintained. Let us rather take the

story as an illustration of a spiritual law. Whatever else we may say about them, every one of these New Testament miracles is an object lesson, setting forth, in concrete form, some principle or process of the spiritual life.

Christ's parables bring before us the similitude between certain physical facts and certain spiritual facts. Thus one parable opens to us a beautiful analogy between the work of the teacher of truth and the work of the sower of seed. It is plain that some of the phenomena of the spiritual world can be finely illustrated by the operations of natural law.

But it is equally clear that some of the phenomena of the spiritual world cannot be explained by any physical operations with which we are familiar. Between those spiritual laws which we know and those physical laws which we know, there are similitudes, and there are also contrasts. The kingdom of heaven is, in some respects, like what we see going on in the garden and the field and the forest, and in some respects it is unlike all these forms of life. And it is these phases of the spiritual life which are represented to us in the miracles of our Lord. In the parable we see natural law appearing in the spiritual world; in the miracles of Christ we see spiritual law appearing in the natural world, and setting up unusual conditions there. A profounder philosophy and a more perfect synthesis may show us that these two realms are one, and

that what we call miracle is really the action of forces which are purely natural — the action of a higher nature with whose processes we are not yet familiar. But let us look at what lies on the surface of this narrative.

Here, to begin with, is a great result achieved with small resources. Five thousand and more are abundantly fed with five loaves and two fishes.

Do we ever see anything like this happening in the natural world? We do see under the power of life wonderful multiplications of natural organism. A single kernel of corn may multiply, in one summer, to hundreds of kernels; and there are many orders of plants and animals, which, if their geometrical increase were not checked, would soon cover the surface of the earth. Life is, in many of its tribes, marvelously prolific.

Yet this natural increase all goes on under the law of conservation of energy. There are marvelous transformations of the materials existing upon the surface of the earth, but there is no real addition to them. The kernel of corn becomes a great stalk, almost a tree, with its green bannerets, and its tufted plumes, and its branching ears; but for all that it has thus become, it is indebted to the earth and the air; every particle of the matter which is thus organized has been drawn out of the soil or the atmosphere; by as much as its life has been enriched, by so much are the earth and the

air the poorer. Even in the kingdoms of life, what one existence has another has not — what one gains some other must lose.

Now it does not appear, in this narrative, that the multiplication of these loaves and fishes involved any diminution or loss of force or substance to anybody. There was a marvelous increase, at no cost to those by whom it was ministered. Nay, they seem to have been richer at the end of their ministry than they were at the beginning. Each of the twelve went out with a few fragments in his hand, kept giving them away, took nothing from any one, and came back with a basket full. This is a process for which the natural order, so far as we now understand it, furnishes no analogy.

Yet we constantly see, in the spiritual world, something very like this taking place. We see the smallest and feeblest resources multiplied indefinitely, with no apparent diminution anywhere to balance this increase; rather with evident gains to all by whom the increase comes.

Less than a hundred years ago a few young men were wont to meet behind a haystack, in the edge of a grove near Williams College, to pray that God would provide a way by which they might go forth as missionaries to the heathen. The new impulse which had taken possession of their souls sprang from the discovery of the truth that God loves all men, and is ready to save all men. Up to

this time the general belief had been that Christ died for the elect only; that the heathen nations were not included in the plan of salvation. Now there were those who ventured to assert that the atonement was not limited; that Christ had tasted death for every man; that whosoever would might come and take of the water of life freely. This was considered before that day a great and dangerous heresy; those who taught it were believed to be the enemies of true religion; harder words were said about them than are said about any of the new theologians of this day. Nevertheless, they found in this heresy a great motive to work for the building of the kingdom; since the gospel was for all men they desired that all men should hear the gospel, those who were far off as well as those who were near. But there were only a few of them, obscure, humble, college students, in an out of the way corner of New England. Nobody who had stumbled upon the little group in their seclusion would have been greatly impressed by what he saw. If any one had asked him wherewith this might grow, he would have stared at the suggestion that anything important could come out of it. Yet it was only a year or two later, as the result of this little prayer meeting, that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was formed; and out of that germ has sprung the whole great foreign missionary work in America, with its

thousands of missionaries, and its hundreds of thousands of converts, and its millions of dollars annually contributed for the prosecution of the work, with colleges and high schools and schools for girls in every part of the world; with influences at work that are leavening many nations. The beginnings were small and feeble, but the issues are large and fair. Out of resources that seemed insignificant something very grand has been evolved.

Go a little further back in history. In an old manor house, in Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, England, a small company of religious outcasts were wont to meet in the early hours of the morning, to worship God according to the simple rites which they preferred. Not many of the wise or the mighty were among them; ecclesiastically they were pariahs; the great English Church had made the exercise of their religion a crime, and was hunting them, like venomous reptiles, out of her borders. Nobody who saw that little company hiding before day in the Scrooby manor house, could have supposed that anything important was likely to arise from such a meeting; yet that was the Pilgrim Church, which landed a few years later in Leyden, Holland, and a little later still, from the Mayflower, on the sands of Plymouth harbor, in Massachusetts Bay, and planted a germ which has developed into a nation of seventy millions. Whatever other beginnings may have been made upon this soil, the

ideas and the forces which organized that Plymouth Colony have been the constructive elements of this nation. They were all represented there in that little company at Scrooby manor.

Travel a little further back across the centuries, and look upon that small congregation of very common people assembled in an upper chamber in Jerusalem and waiting for the promise of the Father. There were about six score of them; and they, too, were despised and rejected of men; none of the magnates of their nation had anything but contempt and curses for them; but this was the germ of Christendom; it was by the testimony of these men, by the manifestation of the life that was in them, that the Christian church was formed, that the influences were set in motion by which one third of the population of the earth has been Christianized.

Such wonderful results as these we are often able to trace in the action of the spiritual forces. Nor am I able to find in these phenomena anything which indicates that they come under the law of the conservation of energy. I do not discover that spiritual effects of this nature, though they are stupendous in their range and reach, are produced by reducing life at other points. I do not see that the world is impoverished anywhere, in order that it may be enriched by this multiplication of spiritual energies.

In truth, the law of the spiritual life is unlike the law of the physical life in this, that it increases by what it imparts and lives by what it loses. We may say what we will about this story of the feeding of the five thousand; but we know that in all the *superior* realms of our life something exactly like what is said to have taken place here on the shores of Gennesaret is all the while going on. We go out very often, with a few fragments, and by dint of giving these away diligently, we come back with baskets full. We have but little ourselves, and are very conscious of the smallness of our resources; but the more we give to others the more we have left.

Take a man like Mark Hopkins, like Theodore Woolsey, like Noah Porter, like James Fairchild; the mind of any of them, in its youthful periods, is crude and comparatively barren. Good scholars they are; they master their books; certain amounts of knowledge they have accumulated, but how deficient are they in the larger quality of wisdom. The early essays of Dr. Hopkins are correct in form, and show a certain mental alertness, but how little there is in them compared with what we find in the later writings. But this man begins, in his youth, freely to impart what he has freely received. He has not much to bestow, at the beginning, but such as he has he gives. Year after year he pours out the treasures of his accumulated wisdom into the

minds of his pupils. To one class after another, to one generation after another, he seeks to communicate the best he has — all he has; to keep back nothing; to share with these young minds his choicest gains. Scores and hundreds of them glean from his lips the fruit of ripe thought, of large experience; their ideas are cleared, their mental processes are rectified, their judgment is steadied, their imagination is chastened, their whole intellectual and moral life is invigorated and enriched by what he has given to them. And how is it with him? Is he impoverished by this lavish bestowal? No; every year his knowledge widens, his wisdom deepens, his insight clarifies, his temper becomes more genial, his sympathies more comprehensive. He has given his best life to thousands, but not one of the thousands of receivers has gained one hundredth part of what he, the giver, has won. Does any man believe that a closeted recluse, absorbing and hoarding knowledge, could ever have become so large-minded, so large-hearted, so full of benignant wisdom? No, it is the very act of giving by which this mind has been enriched. It is not merely the exercise of the mental faculties, it is their benevolent exercise, it is the use of these powers under the spiritual law, that has wrought this enlargement of the nature.

Take a woman like Dorothy Pattison, — Sister Dora, — in her youth rather willful, passionate, inconsiderate of others, and watch the effect upon her

nature of a life of service. How steadily it broadens and ripens under this regimen. She is giving herself more and more unreservedly to the care of the needy and the suffering; she is never thinking about self-culture; she covets only those gifts that can make her life more useful to those about her; delicate lady as she is, her days are spent amid the most loathsome and repulsive scenes; all that she studies to do is to give comfort and relief and happiness to others. And how is her character affected by this discipline? Those who estimate life by the common worldly standards should expect to find her growing hard and sour and shrewish; they should look to see her small stock of amiability and tenderness utterly exhausted by this daily expenditure; surely one who has so little and spends so much must be impoverished. But this is not the law of the spiritual realm. The more she gives of sympathy and tenderness the more she has to give; the sources of her affection are deepened; new fountains of gracious compassion are unsealed; the rather hard-natured girl becomes the good angel of the suffering poor of a whole city. There, to-day, in the market place of Walsall her statue stands, the tribute of the people who loved her. Look into that calm, strong, radiant face. You do not need to be assured that it is a good likeness; the soul is shining through it. It is the glory of womanhood. And it was won, as that glory is always won, not by

grasping at personal good or gain ; not by seeking recognition and social distinction, but by giving — freely, constantly, lavishly — service, ministry, love, life, to all who were in need.

There is no question about this law. The facts that I am reciting to you can be multiplied in the observation of every thoughtful person. You know by abundant evidence, that the goods of the spiritual realm are increased by dispensing them ; that those and those only are enriched who give abundantly, constantly, with no thought of return. Every spiritual power or possession is enhanced by sharing it with others. My faith is strengthened when I can inspire some other soul with confidence ; if my hopefulness is caught by other hearts, my own hope is confirmed ; if I can kindle joy in a sorrowing heart, my own beats with livelier pulsations.

No one can doubt that the whole superior realm of man's life is under this higher law. It is not the law of competition ; it is not the law of mutual exclusion ; it is not the law of the conservation of energy. We rise, in our moral and spiritual progress, into a region where these principles which are of the earth earthy no longer bear rule. The law of this higher realm is that which we see illustrated, symbolized, at any rate, in the narrative before us. It is the law which guarantees that those who go forth with fragments, if they but diligently give them away, shall come back with baskets full.

We can clearly see that this law rules in the realm of spirit; but we are perplexed by the suggestion that it can also be made to rule in the material realm. When it comes to the matter of loaves and fishes, we think that we must fall back on the law of the material realm. We do not expect to see the principle of the spiritual realm prevailing over the principle of the material realm; to find our food and raiment, our goods and chattels, our dimes and dollars multiplying as we dispense them. No; I do not think that it would be wise for us to look for anything just like this. I do not, indeed, know how far this process of spiritualizing the material realm may yet be carried. I do not know what will happen when the day comes that the whole creation is waiting and longing for — the day when it shall be manifest that men are the sons of God. I imagine that what we call the powers and laws of nature will be supple and docile under their hands in ways that we do not now comprehend. I surmise that some things which we now call miracles will then become mere commonplaces. And when I see this man Christ Jesus, who stands at the summit of human perfection, wielding forces whose nature I do not understand, my reason is not confounded; it is what I expect. Certain it is that he seemed to possess powers, which some of us do not possess, of spiritualizing nature; of making the forces of the

material realm conform to the laws of the spiritual realm. Every man in some measure does this who learns to rule impulse by reason, and to bring appetite under the dominion of love. But Jesus Christ did it in many ways, and with such demonstrations of spiritual power as are yet to our dull vision marvelous. I do not think that it is well for us to covet the powers that seem to us miraculous. The very fact that they seem so to us is proof that we do not know how to use them; that we would surely do mischief with them.

But it is possible for us to bring large spaces of the lower realm under the influence of the spiritual laws; and when we come near enough to this Christ to catch his spirit and learn his methods we shall be doing this all the while. It may not be possible for us, always, to subjugate matter and its laws by the spiritual principle; but it is possible for us to make this principle regnant in our relations with men. If physical substances cannot be made to conform to spiritual laws, human relations can.

There is a book the title of which is "Natural Law in the Business World." The natural law which is expounded is Rob Roy's rule: —

> "That he should get who has the power,
> And he should keep who can."

It is the law which authorizes and encourages every man to get as much as he legally and safely

can from every one of his fellows. That is what is generally meant by natural law in the business world. And the argument seeks to show that the operation of this law must bring the greatest good to the greatest number. This is precisely the point on which I must dissent from a great deal of current teaching. I do not believe that the business world or any other world can ever be peaceful and prosperous under the operation of this law. It seems to me that what we want is the substitution of spiritual law for natural law in the business world. What would that signify? Simply this: that each, instead of getting as much as he could away from everybody else for himself, should give as much as he could to everybody else. Do you think that that would be a quixotic rule in the business world? I do not think so. I believe that the most successful traders to-day are those who honestly try to give their customers as much as they can for their money — not as little as they can. I believe that this liberal policy proves to be good policy. As much as they can, I say. The business must be maintained; common prudence must be used; the methods must not be such as shall destroy the business or make its manager a pauper; but within the bounds of ordinary sagacity, the man who gives his customers as much as he can afford to give them for their money is more likely in the long run to succeed, than the man who gives

them just as little for their money as he can prevail on them to take. Down here, on this very lowest plane, unmitigated selfishness is not profitable. People recognize this fact when they speak of an "enlightened self-interest" as being wiser than mere crass egoism. But what do they mean by "enlightened self-interest?" The conduct which they so describe is that which is not purely egoistic; it is that which admits some consideration for the interests of others; it is conduct which recognizes, to some extent, the social bond that unites us, and the *mutual interests* of human beings; conduct, in other words, which has come partly under the spiritual laws. Until some small infusion of the spiritual element has been imparted to society men cannot live together at all. Society founded solely upon what is by these philosophers called natural law, ruled by no other principle, would be what is commonly known as hell. And we can all see, that even in the world of trade, a mixture of the spiritual element with the element of competition and conflict does not prevent, but promotes prosperity.

But let us try the principle in another realm where human relations are a larger factor in the problem. Let us think of the society which is composed of the employer and the employed. Would not a substitution of spiritual law for natural law increase the welfare, the material welfare, of the

whole of this society? Take a great industry in which the employer, on his side, was trying to get just as much as he could out of his employees, and the employees, on their side, were trying to get as much as they could out of their employer; each side acting from the principle of sheer selfishness. Let the fundamental law of that society be changed. Let the spiritual principle be brought in to modify what men call the natural principle. Let the employer earnestly seek to give his men as much as he can for their service, and the employees honestly endeavor to give their master as much as they can for the wages he pays them; is not the prosperity of that industrial group likely to increase? Would not the product of such an industry be considerably enlarged, and would there not be more to divide between employer and employed? I am not saying anything about methods, now; I am only speaking of the spirit, the motive, that might control the relations of this industrial group. I am supposing, also, that this spirit is manifested on both sides of this relation. If the employer were utterly selfish, and the employees only were inspired with good-will, the relation could not be prosperous; neither would it work when the employer was the only Good Samaritan and the employees were mostly shirks and sponges; but when each party heartily wishes to do all he can for the welfare of the other, there is, I say, a better promise of pros-

perity for both, than where each is determined to advance its own interests at the expense of the other? Can any sane man doubt this? If the relations of men in industrial society were spiritualized to such an extent that the law of grasping were supplanted, in some good degree, by the law of giving, would there not be more for all? Does not the principle which we find in the story we are studying — the principle that our possessions are increased by sharing them — come pretty near fulfillment even here within the material realm. For my own part, I do not expect that there will ever be security or plenty or peace in the world, that poverty and misery and strife will ever be banished or greatly mitigated, until men have learned how to make spiritual law broadly operative in the business world.

But whatever the effect of the observance of this law might be upon our material prosperity, whether or not it would enlarge our gains and our revenues, one effect it would certainly have; it would greatly enhance the value of what we do possess. The real question is not, after all, how much we have, but how much good it does us; how much real satisfaction we get out of it. There are millionaires, not a few, who get less enjoyment and less real benefit out of their vast incomes, than many a day laborer gets out of his wages, than many a hard-working clerk gets out of his small salary. The man whose

character, whose manhood, whose essential happiness is most increased by his possessions, is the man whose portion is most to be coveted.

Now here is a fact that I know by experience, and so do many of you — a fact that is just as distinctly a part of our consciousness as is our personal identity. We know that when we divide our portion, for love's sake, with our brother, what we have left is worth more to us than the whole would have been if we had kept it all for ourselves. We know that the real value of our possessions is enhanced by sharing them with those that are in need. We know that it is only when the love that prompts us to do good and to communicate is in our hearts that we derive the highest enjoyment from our earthly possessions. We have gone out, more than once, with our fragments in our hands ; we have distributed more freely, perhaps, than we thought prudent, and we have come back, if not with baskets full, at least with hearts full, which is the main thing, after all.

Here, then, are our every-day miracles. Whatever may have happened to those loaves and fishes, we know, that with the real bread of life, which is love, this very thing happens every day. We divide our portion with those less fortunate than ourselves, and what is left is more because of what was given ; the part is larger than the whole. We give daily, all that is most truly ourselves, — give freely

of thought and hope and love — and find our treasure daily growing; the more we bestow the larger is our store. How fast this world might grow rich if all men would stop hoarding their best, and would begin to give it away, with unstinted bounty to all who were able to receive it.

XVII

SHOW US THE FATHER

Philip said unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time here with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? — JOHN xiv. 8, 9.

THIS is part of the last conversation of Jesus with his disciples, the young men who had been his constant companions for about three years, and whom he had been training to receive his message and to be the witnesses to the world of the truth he had come to declare. They had understood from him that it was his mission to reveal God to them and to the world. He was the Word, the expression, the utterance of God; the purpose of his coming, as he says to the Father in the prayer with which this last conversation closes, is that men "might know thee the only true God and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Now he is going away from them, and it seems to this apostle that the purpose of his coming is not yet fulfilled. It would appear that Philip had been patiently waiting in the expectation of seeing God. Perhaps he had treasured in his mind the beati-

tude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," and had been trying to cleanse his own heart and life that to him the beatific vision might come. But he had waited in vain. The great disclosure had not been made. Now, therefore, he begs his Master not to go away until the veil has been drawn aside and the vision of God has appeared to the disciples. "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." With that sight we shall be content. That will give us the certainty we need.

I wonder what Philip imagined that disclosure would be. Doubtless he had some kind of conception of it. Beyond a question he supposed that it would be some revelation to his senses. Perhaps he recalled the old story of the three who came to Abraham as he rested at his tent door in the evening, and sat down and supped with him, one of whom, as the narrative distinctly implies, was Jehovah himself. Such appearances of God in human form the Hebrews had always believed in; it may be that Philip had thought that Jesus would come into the assembly of the disciples some evening leading in a venerable and majestic Form and thus making known to them the Father.

Perhaps he thought of that marvelous disclosure to Moses on Mount Sinai; perhaps he remembered the vision that Ezekiel describes, when between the whirling wheels of fire, and under the outstretched wings of the cherubim, "the glory of Jehovah

mounted up from the cherub and stood on the threshold of the house, and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah's glory. And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of God Almighty when he speaketh." Such pictures had, it may be, risen up before the mind of Philip while he had been listening to those words of Jesus in which he had spoken of making known to them the Father. Some such conceptions have always haunted the minds of men when the name of God and the knowledge of God have been brought before their thought. Often the image thus appearing to them is frankly human, and that, no doubt, is the least misleading; but often, also, the imagination has sought in some effulgence of dazzling light, in some splendor of color or movement, to represent to itself the divine Presence. So Dante, in that last sublime vision:

"Within the deep and luminous subsistence
Of the High Light, appeared to me three circles
Of threefold color and of one dimension,
And by the second seemed the first reflected
As Iris is by Iris, and the third
Seemed fire that equally from both is breathed.
O how all speech is feeble and falls short
Of my conceit, and this to what I saw
Is such 't is not enough to call it little.
O Light Eterne, sole in thyself that dwellest,
Sole knowest thyself, and, known unto thyself,
And knowing, lovest and smilest on thyself!

That circulation, which being thus conceived
Appeared in thee as a reflected light,
When somewhat contemplated by mine eyes,
Within itself, of its own very color
Seemed to me painted with our effigy,
Wherefore my sight was all absorbed therein.
As the geometrician, who endeavors
To square the circle, and discovers not
By taking thought, the principle he wants,
Even such was I at that new apparition;
I wished to see how the image to the circle
Conformed itself, and how it there finds place,
But my own wings were not enough for this,
Had it not been that then my mind there smote
A flash of lightning, wherein came its wish."

But that experience Dante could not report. Unspeakable words were these, not lawful for man to utter; albeit there is prophetic insight in that swift glance which beheld in the full blaze of the glory of divinity the image of the human form divine.

All these attempts to conceive or represent duty are, however, not only fanciful but misleading. All of them are pictures presented to the eye. They are physical representations. They are sensuous revelations. Into such forms as these men have always been trying to put their thought of God. I am very sure that if you who listen to me would stop and try to give definiteness to your own conception of the Supreme Deity you would find it taking a form which might be represented in a painting or a photograph and seen by the bodily eye.

It was some such representation of God as this

that Philip expected. He had been looking for it, perhaps, for many months. On the mountain top, under the stars at night, in the shady grove, beneath the shadow of a great rock in the desert, he had hoped that the apparition might visit him; he had waited and watched for its appearing, but it had not come. But Jesus had promised, and Philip was still hoping. Doubtless, he thinks, before he goes away, the veil will be drawn aside and he will see his heart's desire. So he ventures to remind the Master: "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us."

There is a pathetic accent in our Lord's reply. How little, after all, even these chosen ones have learned from his lips, from his life! How strange it is that this man should still be clinging to a conception so crude! For Jesus sees that Philip thinks that the only real way to see the Father is with the bodily eye; that no revelation of God to him will give him any satisfaction but some majestic form, some dazzling light, some physical or sensuous manifestation. Because he has been looking for God to appear in *such* forms, he has been wholly unable to discern him in the real revelations that he is making of himself, all the while, in the world. These crude and sensuous conceptions of God have even obscured that brightest manifestation of God's glory which the world has ever seen, in the person of the Master at whose feet for three years he has been

sitting. It is to this that the Lord first seeks to draw his mind. "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, show us the Father?"

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." It is not, I dare say, to any supernatural or miraculous phenomena connected with his history that Jesus is now referring. It is rather in his whole life and character that the Father has been revealed. It is in the purity and truth, the fidelity and constancy, the patience and meekness, the long-suffering love, which have been disclosed in his words and his deeds that the divine lineaments have appeared. Jesus has often told his disciples that God is a Spirit; and if this is true, then the perfect revelation of him must be in the spirit and to the spirit. It cannot, then, be anything miraculous; for miracles appeal to the senses. A miracle, by definition, is some apparent suspension of a natural law, and a suspension of natural law must be cognizable by the senses. But things of the spirit are not cognizable by the senses. The eye cannot see, the ear cannot hear the things which are revealed through the Spirit of God to the spirit of man. When men's thoughts are centred on the sensuous, the miraculous, they always fail to see the deep and real things of the Spirit. That was the trouble with Philip. He had been looking for wonders and signs

so intently that he had not seen the real revelation, the glorious revelation of God in the life and charter of Jesus his Master. It was by the spirit only that this divineness could be discerned, and he had been watching all the while at the portals of sense. The character of Jesus, the life of Jesus, was the manifestation of the Father; that was the great fact which he had failed to comprehend.

Let us not fail to put the proper emphasis on this word Father. As Philip uses it, it is only a synonym for the Supreme Deity, but as Jesus uses it it is something more than that. Jesus was not, he never claimed to be, the revealer of the existence of the Supreme Deity. That was not his mission. He does not say, "He that hath seen me has seen the Creator," or the Infinite and Eternal Energy, from whom all things proceed. It is not God as force, or as law that is manifested in him. "He that hath seen me hath seen the *Father*." That was the revelation that men needed. That was the knowledge of God which they had hitherto failed to gain. There was no need of displaying before them the power of God; the evidence of that, no matter how presented, whether in law or in miracle, would have no effect whatever on their characters. There could be no inspiration, no salvation in that. Men's hearts are not changed by power. Men's lives are not purified by force. It was the character of God which needed to be revealed to men, and of

God's character Jesus was himself the revelation. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." That truth about God which you need to know, he tells Philip — the truth that brings salvation, you learn by listening to my words, by receiving my spirit, by sharing my life.

Is it not true that a great many people in these days, believers and unbelievers, are searching for God in the same way that Philip was searching for him; demanding the same kind of evidence that he was demanding, and troubled as he was by their doubts because such evidence is not forthcoming? Is not the proof of God which many people in these days insist upon a proof that appeals to sense rather than to spirit, a demonstration in the outward realm of physical fact more than in the inward realm of spiritual feeling? And is not the answer that Jesus gave to Philip the one that we need to emphasize to-day? To those who ask us to show them God, to make certain to them his presence in the world, is it not sufficient to say: The convincing signs of his presence are not to be found in the physical realm. A miracle, what appeared to be an interruption of the physical order, would not be good evidence. The order itself, when reverently studied, does give us reason for believing that he is in his world. But, after all, it is not there, in the physical order, that we find the most conclusive reasons for believing in him. It is in the moral world, the world

of spirit, the world of character, that we gather our most convincing proofs. Christ himself was the manifestation of God, and it is the Christliness which the world contains which manifests him to-day. Wherever the truth of Christ influences human thought, and the purity of Christ helps to cleanse and sanctify human life, and the patience of Christ subdues human enmities, and the pity of Christ heals human hurts and sorrows, and the gentleness of Christ brings men together in unity, and the love of Christ becomes, in any feeble and imperfect way, the law of human life, there we behold the Father.

How far the human world is yet from being transformed into the image of Christ nobody needs to be told. How much there yet is of animalism and greed and meanness and cowardice and spite and hate the newspapers do not fail to let us know. But, after all, some mighty changes have taken place in humanity in the last nineteen hundred years; even in the limited and partial way in which Christliness has become incarnated in human life, there is much that ought to stir our hearts with deepest gratitude.

The mind of Christ does not control all the thinking of men; but over a great part of the world it widely and deeply influences human thought. The ideas of Christ have helped in a marvelous degree to shape and color the literature and the art of

the most civilized nations. The spirit of Christ finds utterance in many of the laws of Christendom by which the weak are protected and the poor are befriended.

The inscription in St. Paul's Cathedral to the memory of Sir Christopher Wren, the architect, tells the reader, "If you wish to see his monument, look about you!" The great cathedral itself, from crypt to dome, is his monument; he needs no other. Reverently we may apply this saying to Him whose life is the spring of Christian civilization. If you desire evidence of the presence of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, behold it in a world which his love is steadily transforming. The Father is seen in the work that has been done in and for humanity through his well-beloved Son.

"Show us the Father," are you crying? Well, you may get at least a glimpse of him wherever the sentiment of brotherhood has found a lodgment in human hearts. Stand with me in a great church in England and hear the congregation pouring out their hearts in this hymn:

"When wilt thou save the people?
O God of mercy, when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!
Flowers of thy heart, O God, are they:
Let them not pass like weeds away,
Their heritage a sunless day —
God save the people!"

You might think that that was a purely American sentiment, but it is not: the feeling of brotherhood is world-wide; men of many nations respond to the same inspiring call; they have learned to say "Our Father," and the meaning of the great fact is slowly dawning upon human thought and shaping human government.

"Show us the Father!" Behold the multitudes gathering on election morning from palace and cabin, from boulevard and alley, and standing before the ballot box on the common level of citizenship, every man a freeman, every man a sovereign. The democracy in whose name they gather is but the expression in terms of political rights of the truth of the common Fatherhood which came by Jesus Christ.

"Show us the Father!" Stand here among the busy wharves and see the ships from every shore bringing throngs of men and women with strange garb and outlandish speech, all made welcome, protected, feeling themselves secure, seeking and finding home and livelihood among strangers. What would have happened two thousand years ago to companies of men who found themselves cast upon a foreign shore? Why is it that these are so safe among us? Because we have been reading the story of the Good Samaritan, and have learned that one of another race may be our neighbor, nay, our brother.

"Show us the Father!" See that little group of men in the old Dutch capital, sitting around one council table, and seeking by reason and justice to compose national difficulties, for which, only a little while ago, there was no solution but the sword. In high places some one has been heard saying that the children of one Father ought to be able to settle their quarrels without war.

"Show us the Father!" Far away, on the other side of the world, there has been dearth and famine and hundreds of thousands are perishing with hunger. But see, from every shore swift ships are sailing with bread for the hungry, and the compassion that springs from the heart of the universal Father unites in the bonds of brotherhood races divided by half the circumference of the globe.

The head of a great nation falls by the assassin's hand, — and lo, in every harbor, all round the world, the flags are drooping, and the sorrow of one people is answered by millions who can speak no other tongue that we can understand but the eloquent language of their tears. Are they not all our brethren?

"Show us the Father!" Come and sit where busy women have gathered the little children of the poor out of cellar and hovel and are seeking to guide them into the ways of life. Visit many a home where charity begins, and does not end, but goes forth on errands of service and compassion to

the needy and the friendless. Tarry in the home itself and ponder the significance of its sacred order, its enduring peace, its ministry of love; the home in which the mother is neither a drudge nor a slave but the equal companion of her husband; in which the children are honored and sheltered and tenderly nurtured, — and compare it with the homes of Greece and Rome, whose civilization ruled the earth when Philip and Jesus were talking together that night in Jerusalem. What has built this Christian home but the love of the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named?

"Show us the Father!" Nay, for the time would fail me to speak of all the beautiful services of compassion whereof the earth is full; of hospitals where sickness is healed and pain is lightened; where minds diseased are ministered unto and darkened intellects are led into the light; of the messengers of pity who nurse the sick and comfort the sorrowful; of the shelters where the aged and the homeless may find rest; of the bands of Good Samaritans in the cities who go down and live among the poor; of the thousands of heroic men and women in tropical jungles and on lonely islands in the sea who are giving their lives for the rescue of them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; — of the whole beautiful growth of Christian charity as it springs from the dark soil of human selfishness and passion, and transforms the

mould of sordid greed and brutal hate into the blossoms of sympathy and the kindly fruits of benevolence.

Let us give one more thoughtful look into the world about us, for signs of the presence of our Father. Upon the faces of the children of men our eyes shall rest, beholding there what painter can never quite convey, the note of character, the subtle lines that hint the quality of the inner life. The faces of the children of men, as you see them upturned to you in an assembly like this, are an impressive revelation. And these faces, in the message that they utter, change from age to age. The inward thoughts and feelings, the habitual emotions and aspirations write their lineaments upon the human countenance. As the ruling ideas of men are modified, as the prevailing sentiments take on new form and color, men's faces reveal the inward transformation. And there can be no doubt that a great change has passed over the human physiognomy since the day when Jesus came to earth. Our own ancestors were savages in the German forests then; their faces might have been searched in vain for any spiritual beauty. But the sculptors and the painters of Greece and Rome were men of quick artistic sense; and they have kept for us the effigies of great numbers of those who were the first men and women of their time. We know, therefore, what were the types of the human countenance in

the highest civilization of that day. We can conjecture what the sea of faces looking down from the stone seats of the theatre or the colosseum must have been like. And we are sure that it would have presented to the gazer a very different aspect from that which he would behold in the multitude of countenances on which he might look to-day in any great assembly of Christendom. The human *form* in those old days was no less beautiful than it is to-day; but the human face — how different it is, in all the representations of it that have come down to us from antiquity, from that which draws out our highest admiration! Those old emperors and senators, those philosophers and heroes, those types of manly and womanly beauty which live for us in marble, present characteristics quite different from those that we have learned to look for in the best human faces. It matters not whether they were portraits or ideals; if the latter, they report no less clearly the highest conceptions of humanity which then were known. And if you will compare those old types with the realities of to-day, you will see what a change has passed upon humanity. The faces are hard, severe, strong, masterful; those which preserve for us the models of beauty, the Antinous and the Phryne, present to us the perfection of feature and of sensuous form, but of the higher graces of character they give no hint. Study the heads in the Louvre and see how many you find

among them that kindle your admiration or warm your heart. Then look into the typical faces of men and women of to-day, into the face of Gladstone or Ruskin or Stanley or Cardinal Newman, or Lowell or Phillips Brooks or George William Curtis, or the strong, sad, sublime countenance of Abraham Lincoln. What is in these faces that that old world never saw? A tinge of sadness, doubtless, a note of pain, but pain over which joy and hope are victorious; they are faces that tell of spiritual conflict and mastery; lines are here that speak of sympathy, of tenderness, of pity, of the courage that is touched with gentleness; of the firmness that is born of faith. These faces reveal a whole realm of habitual thought which to that old life was foreign. What is the one word that describes the difference between the typical Caucasian faces of to-day and those of the first century? Their look is more *humane;* it reveals a life more truly human, — and therefore more nearly divine. Something is reflected in them of that Face which was so marred more than any man, yet that was fairer than any of the sons of men —

> "That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes, but to recompose,
> Become my universe that feels and knows."

How many human countenances there are still that very imperfectly reflect the divine light! How many that are darkened by ignorance and clouded by

enmity and disfigured by selfishness and sodden by lust and shadowed by suspicion; how many in which the light of hope is quenched by trouble and care; how many that reveal few signs of high thoughts and true aspirations; how many that men call beautiful which are empty and blank and destitute of every sign of spiritual beauty! But blessed be God, there are many faces on which he is writing his benediction; true faces, pure faces, kind faces, compassionate faces, happy, hopeful, winning faces; faces from which the light of the spirit shines; and we know and are sure that if the glory of God is ever seen in this world, it will be in the love-light beaming from human faces. We rejoice and praise Him to-day that so much of it is visible even now; and we pray that we all, beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, may be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

XVIII

THE EDUCATION OF OUR WANTS

He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack. — Ex. xvi. 18.

This is said concerning that marvelous bread from heaven, the manna, which fed the children of Israel in the wilderness. Every evening it lay upon the ground in small white flakes, an abundant supply of it, and they were bidden to gather it, "an omer a head, according to the number of your persons shall ye take it every man for them which are in his tent. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, — some more, some less." Some, perhaps, were greedy and feared that they would not get enough, and some were timid and withheld their hands lest they should take too much. But when they came to measure it, the communistic rule was exactly and supernaturally enforced. All had exactly the same amount. The large hoards shrank and the scanty hoards expanded; there was just an omer apiece, all round, in every tent. The greedy were no better off for their greed and the timid were no worse off for their timidity. It is the only society of which I have read, except that in Mr. Bel-

lamy's "Looking Backward," in which the portions of all were exactly equalized. And it would seem that the supply and the demand in every case were precisely equivalent. No one had more than he wanted: no one wanted more than he had. Wants and possessions were in perfect agreement.

This brings us to the theme which I wish to consider with you this morning — the schooling of human wants. We need a great many kinds of education, — the education of our muscles, that they may be vigorous and elastic; of our nerves, that they may be at once alert and sedate; of our senses, that they may properly mediate between ourselves and our environment; of our intellects, that they may digest and assimilate the knowledge brought to us; of our imaginations, that they may fashion for us creations sacred and beautiful; of our affections, that they may cleave unto whatsoever things are pure and honest and of good report, — but not less of our wants, those imperious, insistent, inward powers that do so much to give direction and momentum to our lives. The education of our wants — is there anything more serious or pressing? If every one of those who are listening to me could get his wants properly trained and disciplined so that he should want everything he needed and nothing that was not good for him; so that he should want the best things most and the

things of least value least, — what a happy company this would be?

The beginning of this education of wants is the awakening of wants. Certain primary animal cravings are present in the infant of days, but the range of instinctive desires is comparatively narrow, and without a stimulating education does not greatly widen. The history of civilization is the history of the awakening and multiplication of human wants. The missionary finds the savages of Africa to be creatures with very few wants. They require a little coarse food, a very little clothing, a shelter of mud with no window and no chimney, a bow or a spear, a hatchet of stone, some rude family life, some human attachment to the tribe or the clan, some intervention, now and then, of priest or juggler with weird rites to represent and propitiate the powers of that other world of which the spirit must have some haunting sense; but when you have made up your full catalogue of all the things this primitive man ever thinks of and wishes for, how meagre a list it is. All the elements of a man are there; he has a body with its appetites, a mind with reasoning power, a social nature that links him with his kind, a spirit that holds converse with the unseen, — yet how little it takes to satisfy all his desires!

The first thing to do for him is to make him want more things and better things, — and this is precisely the process which goes on in his life.

Some of us heard one of our missionaries explaining it very vividly, not long ago. The savage by his contact with the missionary finds unconsciously awakened in him new wants. He begins to want better garments to protect him from the cold and to shield him from the sun; a better house to live in, in which the smoke of his fire will not blind and strangle him, and into which the sunlight may find its way; better food to eat; better implements, — an axe and a spade and a plow; presently he wants that mysterious power of communicating with some one at a distance, which he sees the missionary exercising, when he makes marks upon a bit of paper, and it is carried to some one else in the next village who understands it and answers in the same way, — magic, it seems to the wondering child of Nature, but he wants to possess it for himself and for his children; and thus his intellectual wants are awakened and he is started on the long and gainful quest of the knowledge that can be transmitted by letters and the power which such knowledge gives. By and by he learns, through his love for the man who is bringing him all these wonderful things, to listen to what the man has to tell him about the Father of us all, and the Lord and Leader of men, and finds a want springing up in his heart for the love of this all-Father and the friendship of this great Friend.

We can all see that the deepest need of this fellow creature, tied so close to the earth, is the awakening and development of new wants. The trouble with him in his native state is that he has so few desires; that he is not at all aware of the many good things that are within his reach. We can all see that the development of wants, even on the material side of his nature, is a normal and healthy process; that it is as natural and wholesome for the human nature to put forth these new cravings as for the plant to put forth new buds and branches; that we advance toward perfection by the awakening and the satisfying of new desires. It is well for the Bushman or the Hottentot that he has learned to want a garment for his nakedness, a house instead of a mud hut, a table, at which he may sit down with his wife and children, asking God's blessing on his food and making each meal a sacrament, instead of snatching a morsel here and there and eating as the wild beast eats, in solitude, with a growl at every intruder; it is well that he has learned to till his fields, and store his fruits and grains and protect himself against famine; it is well that there has been kindled in his soul that thirst for knowledge by which he has been enabled to open the treasures of the world's learning; above all, it is well that he has come to put away from his mind the deadly and paralyzing fear of things unseen, and to open his heart to the

love of the Father in heaven, and to the hopes and promises of the life everlasting. We know that when our ancestors, in the German forests, or beside the British fens, were thus visited with influences from without and above themselves that kindled in them the wish for other and higher life, and led them away from barbarism toward civilization, it was well for them, and for us, their children.

From that day to this the process has been going on; the awakened intellect of man has been discovering new possibilities, new combinations of natural force, new uses of natural products, new ministries to human need, and thus has been developing and multiplying human wants. Progress consists largely in the creation and diversification of wants.

What a tremendous enterprise it has come to be — the cultivation of wants in the breasts of the children of men! Whole armies of men are engaged in planting the seeds of wants in the minds of their neighbors. Invention largely takes this direction; infinite energy is expended by multitudes in contriving things which shall create wants. Scores of beautiful and attractive pages in our magazines, and striking displays in the columns of our newspapers are devoted to making us want things; as the swift cars bear us across the country our eyes are constantly caught by startling legends whose purpose it is to make us want something that

we do not now possess. The business of advertising, which has come to be perhaps the most extensive and the most expensive business now carried on in highly civilized lands, is chiefly devoted to the stimulation and direction of human wants. The artists who arrange the shop windows and the show cases are masters in this branch of education. One cannot walk far in a city like this without coming upon something which is designed to awaken in him a want for what he does not now possess. A small girl of my acquaintance, three or four years old, on her first visit to a toy store, stood still and looked with wonder up and down the shelves and counters, and finally said, with an air of pensive surprise: "Why, *I* have n't got all these things!" The business had been done for her; the response of her nature to the appeal of the exhibitor was precisely what he sought.

The business is partly effectually done for all of us. Whatever else our enterprising captains of civilization fail to do, they do not fail in the production of wants; vast crops of them are sown and harvested every year; the supply does not quiet the demand, but stimulates it; the more we have the more we crave. If those of you who have come to maturity of years are able to take an inventory of the things you find yourselves wanting now, and to compare it with a similar inventory of the things you were wanting forty years ago, you will be sur-

prised, perhaps, to see what an addition has been made to the number of the things regarded by you as needful. If any of you can recall your life in college forty years ago and compare your wants then with the wants of your own boys and girls now in college, you will have another illuminating illustration of the way wants multiply.

In fact, there is reason to fear that this business of creating and diversifying wants has gone quite too far in the lives of many of us. We must not quarrel with civilization, but it is hard to resist the conviction that there has been developed a vast number of unreal, superficial, artificial wants; that cravings have been kindled in many of us for much that adds nothing to life, to its strength, its beauty, its usefulness, its real satisfaction. Indeed, we must say that many of us are possessed and dominated by cravings for that which is hurtful and degrading and destructive to manhood. But, putting aside the debasing appetites, the hankerings for pollution and poison, — there is still a vast number of unnatural and trivial cravings through which a large part of the vital energies of men in this generation are poured out, and which bring into the life nothing but emptiness and weariness and poverty of soul. Take the life of our frivolous plutocracy, — the life of the thousands of young men and women in this country who have money to burn, as they say, and nothing to do but amuse themselves, and make a

catalogue of the things which have become to them imperative wants. What a pitiful exhibit it would be!

I doubt whether a sadder, a more depressing picture was ever painted, in any age of the world, than that which is found in a few of the middle chapters of Richard Whiteing's novel, "Number Five, John Street" — his picture of the life of the rich young men of London. It is not a grossly immoral life as he shows it to us; but it is so empty, so trivial, so utterly devoid of purpose, so absorbed with inanities. Neither Horace nor Juvenal can show us anything more disheartening. Decidedly the people of the slums, between whom and these heavy swells of the West End the story vibrates, are a far more hopeful class. The sketch of Seton Ridler is too obviously a sketch from the life. Such a character could not have been invented.

The most striking and manifestly the most realistic feature of this description is the impression it gives us of the labor and weariness of this kind of life. The engagements are so multitudinous and the demands of this artificial life are so exacting that existence becomes a burden. "I tell you," says one of these devotees of fashion, "it 's just like working in mosaic, — so many little bits to fit in. I don't think our set ever gets a chance in life."

"Always slaving," comments his friend.

"That 's it. Sometimes when I feel I can't lay

hold of it all, I wish I was a 'bloke,' with four bank holidays a year, and there an end."

"And yet we are called the idle rich."

"'Idle rich!' Where would the poor be if we struck for a quiet life? I work ten hours a day inventing wants for myself, and work for them, and very often eight hours overtime."

Such is the congestion of wants to which our complex civilization is bringing many of those who are regarded as the favorites of fortune. It is a melancholy condition. There is no health in it for body or mind or soul, — no comfort, no satisfaction; the pleasures are those of Sisyphus — always rolling the stone uphill to see it go crashing down again; the recreation it brings is like the nightmare compared with refreshing sleep.

It is a far cry from the Bushman in the African forest to the denizens of the London Mayfair, or the favorites of the New York "Four Hundred," staggering under the burden of artificial cravings. Sometimes the social philosopher, revolting from the excesses of our complex civilization, harks back to that primitive barbarism, making the gentle savage his ideal, and proposing to return to that kind of simplicity. That was Rousseau's idea, and Tolstoy seems to be of some such mind. It is a foolish counsel. The bird will not return to the egg and it is idle to talk about it. To throw away all the gains of civilization would be treachery to humanity. To

propose forswearing all the new powers with which invention has equipped us, all the comforts of life, all the refinements of culture, all the pure and elevating pleasures of art, is not a sign of sanity. The barbarian with no wants is certainly quite as far from the ideal of human perfection as is the London swell, swamped beneath the burden of them. The tree needs pruning, not cutting up by the roots. It is not the extermination but the education of wants that is called for. A being without wants is a being destitute of motive power; it is not to stagnation and immobility that we wish to betake ourselves, but to simplicity and health and vigor.

What then is our problem? I think that I must have brought it pretty clearly before your minds in this descriptive sketch. The fact that confronts us is the twofold danger to which human life is exposed, on the one side to the dearth and on the other side to the plethora of wants. There are many among us who have not wants enough; who are quite too well content with squalor and stupidity and ignorance; on the other side there are too many who are so entangled and enslaved by their wants that life has ceased to have for them any high significance; their freedom and their strength are gone. It is well for us clearly to discern both these dangers, and to be on our guard against them. The awakening of new wants may be to some of us a prime necessity; the elimination of artificial and incumbering wants

may be to others the first duty. The creature without desire is a clod, the creature whose life is ravaged and overrun by hoards of clamorous desires is an object of pity.

With most of us, I dare say, the danger is greatest on this side. We have too many wants. A large part of the energy of our souls is expended in hungering and thirsting after that which is not worth while. We are the slaves of cravings from which, if we could but free ourselves, we should be happier and stronger. I am not now thinking most of indulgences essentially vicious and corrupting, but of the excessive devotion to the mere externalities of life — to adornments, and amusements, and sensuous gratifications, to the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. I am sure that if the old prophet were here this morning, and knew some of you as well as I know you, you would hear him saying very earnestly: "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

We must educate our wants. And the first lesson that we must teach them is that they are not our masters. The motive power of life they may be, but they are not its directing intelligence, and they must not usurp the place that does not belong to them. We will let them serve us, but they must

not rule us. That is the trouble with them. "Our needs," says Charles Wagner, "in place of the servants they should be, have become a turbulent and seditious crowd, a legion of tyrants in miniature. A man enslaved to his needs may best be compared to a bear with a ring in its nose that is led about and made to dance at will. The likeness is not flattering, but you will grant that it is true." We must not be the slaves of our cravings. A mere blind want must never be our master. We must bring all these clamorous longings of ours under the rule of reason, and let them be gratified or suppressed according to its arbitration.

It is only an extension of the same idea to say that we must teach our wants to know and keep their places. They are not of equal rank; there are higher and lower, greater and less among them, and the education that they need is that which gives to each its true order and importance, which forbids the lesser to usurp the places that belong to the greater. To desire most strongly and most constantly that which is most precious and most enduring; to shake from their hold upon our hearts the legions of trivialities and vanities — this is the beginning and the end of wisdom in the schooling of our wants. To want the best things most and the poorest things least — if this were our happy state of mind how beautiful our lives would be!

And what are the best things? Plainly they are

the things that belong to character, — the things that pertain to ourselves, more than to our possessions and surroundings; the essential manhood and womanhood, and not its appendages of wealth or rank or decoration. The wants which lay hold on the qualities of character, that make us larger, truer, better men, these we may cultivate and stimulate all we will; there is no danger that these elements will be over developed. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Men and women, there are some of you who need to lay this truth to heart. You have many wants, some more imperious than others; do they not need from you some careful schooling? Would it not be well for you to take a pretty careful inventory of them to-day? Find a quiet place somewhere and sit down and make an honest list of them. Think over the things that occupy your mind most constantly and enlist most fully the strength of your wishes. Get the things that you are really hungering and thirsting for clearly before your thought; then put down the things that your conduct proves to be of secondary importance, and the things that you sometimes wish for but do not greatly dwell upon. Look them over and see whether the order needs revising; whether those which are really the greatest in your estimation ought not to be the least, and those that are least ought not to be greatest.

I have no doubt that in the hearts of all of you, with some distempered and misdirected cravings are many worthy wishes. One thing, I fear, is uppermost in the desires of many, but that I will not name. It is such a cheap and common thing that we will not speak of it. Let it pass. But there are other and better things. You wish for knowledge, for skill, for capacity, for perfection in art, for a good reputation, for recognition and friendship, for the power of influencing men, and all these are worth possessing. But none of them is entitled to the first place in our affections. Surely you know that the crowning wish, the commanding wish of your life must be the wish to be right and true and sound in the centre of your life, to be right in your ruling purpose, to be right with God, — to be in harmony with him in the governing principles of your life. No good that you can think of is higher than that, and you cannot get your own consent to put anything which is lower than that upon the throne of your choice. Put it there to-day. Come to a clear understanding with yourself that this is the principal thing, and the thing on which your heart shall henceforth be set. You hope to possess this great good some day. Register it then in your own consciousness, as your chief want, and make all the other objects of desire bow down and serve it.

"It is the least that a man can do," says Canon

Mozley, "to wish with all his heart that he had some valuable thing, if he is to expect some day to have it. How simple a condition, could man only resolve steadily to wish for the possession of that which he knows to be his chief good; could he but cast aside, once for all, all those vain, those fruitless longings for things that are out of his reach; for gifts and faculties which only glitter and attract the eye; and wish in the sincerity of his heart for what is really to be had for the wishing, — for religious faith and temper."

It is really to be had for the wishing — this one supreme good, of friendship with God, a heart and life in harmony with his will. All we have to do is to make it the supreme wish of our hearts, and it will surely be ours. Of none of the other things that we set our hearts upon can we be sure, and we get most of them, if we get them at all, only at heavy cost: —

> "For a cap and bells our lives we pay;
> Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
> 'T is heaven alone that is given away,
> 'T is only God may be had for the asking."

If we fail of this highest good, it is only because we do not strongly wish for it, because we suffer some lesser good to supplant this upon the throne of our desire. "Ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your hearts, saith the Lord."

XIX

HOW TO BE SURE OF GOD

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forward to the things that are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. — PHIL. iii. 13, 14.

WE have come to the end of the year. The days that are passing are days of accounting and appraisal, — times when we reckon up our gains and write off our losses; when we try to put illusions and visionary hopes aside and face the facts of life. During the year we are apt to bank heavily on our hopes; we do not know how large the profits are; we have no means of judging accurately how the ventures are coming out, but it is constitutional with most of us to look on the hopeful side, to see what we wish to see; and there is apt to be some disparity between the estimate and the reality. But about this time of the year all these assumptions and anticipations are brought to the test of cold arithmetic. Now is the time not to hope, nor to estimate, but to know, and with some misgivings we set ourselves to the task of finding out just where we are. Sometimes, in these reckonings, it turns out

that we are better off than we thought we were, and that is a disappointment which we can bear with much fortitude; but sometimes it is the other way, and we are compelled to dismiss some expectations and to brace ourselves for new efforts and sacrifices.

Much is said about the visionary and chimerical thinking in which we are in the habit of indulging at the turning of the year, and so far as the future is concerned there may be something too much of this; but there are a good many of us, I am sure, who get a little closer to the hard facts of life about this time than at any other time of the year.

This is true of that part of our life which touches the earth; I wish that it might sometimes be true of that part of our life by which we are lifted above the earth. Here, to-day, in the quiet of the sanctuary, I wish that we might all give a little serious thought to the real condition of that part of ourselves which is most worthy of our concern; that part of us which does not die when the body dies; which may be vigorous and vital when the bodily powers are fainting, and may be sick unto death when the body is rioting in strength; which is not enriched by the gains that are enumerated in our ledgers, nor impoverished by the losses recorded there; that part of us which constitutes our proper humanity and makes us to differ from the clods beneath our feet and the living creatures by our side.

There is something wonderful about this part of our nature, the essential manhood and womanhood which is our birthright. The wonder of it, the glory of it, are, I fear, often hidden from our eyes. Nay, who is there among us who has yet begun to apprehend the greatness of his own estate of being, the marvelous significance of the divine humanity of which he is the inheritor. "Thou hast made him," says the Psalmist, "but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor; thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands." What it is hard for us to understand is that the very charter of our greatness is written in the spiritual conditions which appear to us because of their uncertainty most untoward and disheartening. We are here in the world, surrounded by the things of time and sense; animals, with the other animals; allied, through our bodies, with the soil and what grows out of it; having the power to possess and use and find pleasure in the fruits of the earth and the products of our own skill. All these things are real and close, and they bring to us certain satisfactions. At any rate, they are realities. We have them, and know them, and enjoy them. That there is something more than all this we cannot help feeling. When we have reached the perfection of the animals, when we have subdued and replenished the earth, when we have gained possession of all the good that pleases sense, we know that we have

not yet entered into our inheritance. There is something more and higher. There are haunting visions of relations and possibilities not yet realized. But all this is vague, distant, mysterious. And this is often our trouble and complaint.

We hear the name of God; it comes to us upon the lips of those who tell us that they know him; generations and centuries of prophets and apostles and confessors and humble believers bear witness that he is, and that he is good, — the Creator of the universe, the Father of our spirits, the source of all truth and love, and that we are made in his image to have fellowship with him; that this is the highest possibility of the human soul, to receive, of his infinite fullness, the strength and the light and the peace which shall satisfy all our deepest wants. This is what they tell us, but we do not always easily verify their testimony. "Why," we are sometimes inclined to ask, "is not this truth more clearly revealed? Why, in a matter so great as this, is any room left for doubt? Why is not God as palpable as the earth, as demonstrable as the sun in the sky? Is not our need of him our deepest need? Why should not the ministry to it be as direct and inevitable as that by which our physical natures are supplied? It is not so. We may have reasons for believing, but there are also many reasons for doubt, and certainty is not attainable. And often we are forced to cry with Job: —

'O that I knew where I might find him!
I would come even to his seat!
I would order my cause before him,
And fill my mouth with arguments.
. . . . . .
Behold I go forward, but he is not there,
And backward but I cannot perceive him:
On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him;
He hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him.'"

This often seems to us our misfortune and our great disability, that the greatest interests of our lives are involved in so much obscurity. We complain about it sometimes bitterly. We do not know why it should be so. We cry, with the prophet, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself." And there are not a few who, demanding proof which they cannot get — mistakenly demanding a kind of proof which is impossible,—and failing to find God in the places where they are looking for him, abandon the search altogether, and suffer all those parts of the life in which the precious fruits of the spirit ought to grow, to lie fallow. It would be well for us if we could understand that the laws of the spiritual realm are not the laws of the physical realm; and that our knowledge of God must needs be a different kind of knowledge from that which comes from exploring the crust of the earth or searching the stellar spaces. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. The proof of God is not scientific and demonstrable. There is room for doubt, and there

always will be. That is the very condition of spiritual development. The just shall live by faith, not by logical demonstration.

"The desire and passion of God," says a modern prophet, "is to beget souls of men through the long birth processes and the eons of nature, — souls that shall be separate from his own soul, and that shall stand over against him, so that he can look upon them, and have communion with them, and be not alone. And in order that the souls of men shall become thus separate and distinct from the soul of God, it is necessary that God should hide himself, and that men should learn to trust their own thoughts and their own eyes. In this withdrawal of God is the peril and crisis of creation, the inevitable opportunity of sin, the tragedy and pathos of our life upon this earth.

"Do you not understand the taciturnity of God? Do you not see why it is that he does not blazon his name in the sky or accost you with words, — why he bosoms you in his arms, and turns away his face and waits and is patient and silent? . . .

"God could not make a free soul out of hand. He could not *make* it at all. The soul must claim its own liberty and life.

"And so one must say that the free spirit of man is uncreated, is not made by God, but begotten of him. Words fail, for you touch here the hem of the robe of the eternal mystery. But it is not to be

wondered at that God should suffer so long to integrate a soul out of his own soul — a soul that should look him in the face and be faithful to him."

Thus it appears that the very shadows that rest upon our path are the signs of God's presence; the limitations of knowledge are the opportunities of faith, divinely ordained. Never shall we find God with the scalpel or the microscope or the syllogism; it is by venturing upon him, committing our souls to him, that we find him. The only way to be sure of God and the things of his kingdom is to make the great assumption that he is, and act accordingly, taking the risks which such action involves. That may mean adversity, misfortune, desertion of friends, the loss of all things, trouble, suffering, death; whatever it means, that we must accept, if we want to be sure of God.

The great things of life are things which no man ever gets without an unreserved surrender of himself. The real good of fatherland no man possesses who counts his fortune or his life too dear to give them for the safety and honor of his country. The man who is not willing to die for his country is a man

> "Who never to himself hath said
> This is my own, my native land,"

with any deep meaning in his words. Those who fall short of this last full measure of devotion are

men who value their country perhaps on account of the benefits which they have received from it; who are sensible of the protection which it affords them, and proud, it may be, of its progress and its triumphs; but the deep sacramental love, which links the patriot to his fatherland, they do not know. It is this kind of love alone which makes national existence possible; and this kind of love, the love that is ready to sacrifice everything, is the spring and source of the national life in the days of the throbbing war-drum, and not less in the piping times of peace. When it disappears from the hearts of the citizens, and the nation is to them no longer anything more than a mutual insurance agency or a commercial convenience, the day of doom is not far off, and the prophetic voice is heard in stern rebuke: —

> "Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
> Must we but blush? Our fathers bled:
> Earth, render back from out thy breast
> A remnant of our Spartan dead!
> Of the three hundred grant but three
> To make a new Thermopylæ!"

Without the spirit that is ready to risk everything for country, patriotism is a hollow fraud, and the life of the nation is a living death.

Not less true is it of the more intimate personal relations. Are there any reserves in your deepest loyalties? Do you think that you could know the

secret of the truest and purest human love if there were anything but truth and honor which you had not laid upon its altar? What is there that you hesitate to risk in the keeping of your faith with those you hold most dear? Are fortune or station or life too precious to be surrendered for the welfare and the honor of those you love?

If, then, even patriotism and human affection make these demands upon you for an absolute surrender of all you have, and refuse to let you into their deepest secrets on any lower terms, it is not to be supposed that that great friendship with God which is the source of our spiritual life can be yours for less than the frank surrender of yourselves to him. There is no other way to know God but to count everything but loss for the excellency of that knowledge. The ship on the stocks, ready to be launched, must let go utterly and absolutely her hold upon the land and commit herself unreservedly to the deep. There is no such thing as holding on to some of the landward props and stays; no such thing as trusting partly to the land and partly to the water. She must take the risk of believing that the water will support her weight. She is built for the water — so all the shipwrights say; that is the element in which she was made to live; she is worthless on shore, and the sun and the rain and the wind will soon make a wreck of her if she stays on shore; to save her life she must

go down into the deep. That is the voice of reason; but all the reason in the world can never prove that the ship will float; the only proof is in committing her to the water, in letting her walk right out upon the waves.

Just so, we may hear a great deal of argument and testimony to prove to us that God is the element in which we live and move and have our being; but we can never be sure of it unless we try it, and there is no other way of trying it except the way of the ship when it lets go the props that hold it high and dry above the earth and speeds down into the sea.

The question of religion, the question of life; whatever faith a man may hold, whatever theology he may believe, is just this question whether God is such a reality to us that we are ready to risk ourselves in his keeping. "If you should act with simplicity and boldness," asks the writer whom I was but just now quoting, "do you think that you would have to stand alone and take the consequences? Have you no idea that God would back you up? That is the question of religion, the question of life. The man who can answer that question unfalteringly is the man of faith, the man who has 'got religion.' The thing that is right, the thing which, with your best judgment, you see to be right, — that you believe to be God's will. If you believe in God at all, if you are not an atheist, then the

thing which you believe to be right and the thing which you believe to be God's will are one and the same thing, and you cannot separate them even in your thought. Do you believe that if you do God's will he will stand by you; that it is safe to trust yourself in his hands? That is the crucial question of life, of character, of destiny."

It is well, however, to understand what we ought to mean by our belief that God will stand by us, if we do the thing that is right and trust in him. It is not true that those who thus commit themselves to him are assured of plenty and safety and comfort and peace in this world. There is no such assurance. Adversity, pain, loneliness, disaster, death, may be the portion of those who walk with God. To believe in God is not to believe that God will deliver you from such misfortunes and calamities, but that he is with you in them; that they are his ministers, who cannot hurt you, who will serve you and bless you. "Who shall separate us," cries Paul, "from the love of God? Shall tribulation or anguish or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril or sword? Nay, *in all these things* we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." "He leadeth me," sings the Psalmist, "in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, *though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death*, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort

me." Yes, it is when you go down into that sunless valley, —

> "When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
> You are nearing the place,
> The power of the night, the press of the storm,
> The post of the foe,
> Where he stands, the Arch-Fear in a visible form," —

it is then, in that infinite minute, that you are conqueror; then that the soul cries exultingly, "O grave, where is thy victory, O death, where is thy sting." What is death to a man who really believes in God? The very meaning of faith in God — what is it but contempt for what men call danger and suffering and pain? The man who is sure of God is always

> "One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed though right were worsted wrong would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake."

If there is a God, and you and I are sure of him, that will be the kind of temper in which we shall face the fact of death. And if the last great enemy has no terror for us, why should we be afraid of the lesser things that men call calamities?

The faith that sets death at naught is surely able to overcome the world. When we are ready to assume that God is, and to venture our all upon him, the losses and adversities and disappointments that

darken our days and take all the color and the music out of life will vanish as the fogs disappear before the ascending sun. What does it matter whether we have much or little, whether the prizes of life are won or lost, whether the crowd praises or denounces? The great spaces of our thought are full of light and peace; all is well, no matter what fickle fortune may bring.

This, my brother men, is real life — this is life indeed. If we have attained to some understanding, some realization of this truth, then we have really begun to live. We know how to use the world, and life, and time; to get the good out of them; to reap the harvests of light which are sown for the righteous. We are not unhappy, we are not afraid, we are never discouraged, we are never hopeless; the pettiness and meanness of the world do not trouble us; all is well, because we are sure of God. This is the heart of it all, the deep secret of life, the pearl of great price, which, when a man has found he will be ready to sell all that he has that he may make it his own.

Do I speak to you as one who has fully entered into this great inheritance? Nay, I am making no such claim. Often I am timid and despondent and more anxious than I ought to be; often small things vex me, and the judgment of men irks me, and I am afraid of losses and reverses; the whole trouble is that I am not nearly so sure of God as I ought

to be. I am not standing on some eminence above you and calling down to you. I am standing with you, on the common plane of our humanity, but I am lifting my eyes to the hills from which our help must come, and trying to get you to look in the same direction. I have not yet attained, but I know, as well as I can know anything, that the life I am talking about is the right kind of life; that it would be worth to me more than everything else that I ever wish and strive for to be perfectly sure of God and to live, without flinching, right up to that assurance. I know that if that knowledge were in my heart all things would be mine, — the world, life, death, things present, things to come. I should never be a coward, I should never shrink from any sacrifice to which the truth summoned me. I should hold the prizes of pelf and praise for which men are wearing out their lives very cheap. I should not be bartering honor or integrity to get some little selfish advantage, and I should be as happy every day as the day is long. No; perhaps I could not be quite happy if those whom I loved were unhappy; I should have to carry their burdens, to take upon my own soul something of their sorrow. But I should be able, so it seems to me, to help them far more than I help them now; to lead them, if they really loved me, out into the light of God.

And what a world it would be for me to live in, if that were only my portion; what bracing life in

the keen air of winter, what elation in the onward march of the tribes of summer, what gladness in the sunlight, what peace in the messages of the ever-faithful stars!

Nor would the misery and woe of the world oppress me if I could only lift up my thoughts to the heavenly heights and see the old world emerging from the elemental chaos and rolling onward through the eons toward that far-off divine event which is the goal of redemptive love.

I am sure, then, that I know what life means, even if I have but feebly laid hold upon it yet. And there often comes to me a great desire to get rid of the husks and wrappages of things, and get at the heart of the matter, — to put behind me that which is superficial and phantasmal, and find and know and live the life that is life indeed. O the things that we are putting our hearts into, pouring out our lives for, clutching at, crying after, — what do they all amount to, anyway? How long are we going to keep them? What real good will they do us while we have them? Is it all worth while?

Fellow men, we come here every Sunday to talk about God, to sing hymns to him, to pray to him: are we sure of him? How sure are we? Would we like to be more sure? Is there anything else but this, anything without this, that is worth while? Shall we not pledge ourselves, one to another, here to-day, that we will count all things to be loss that

we may know him? The way to find him we have seen. We must just assume that he is, and act as if he were. That is all. There is no argument needed; argument is futile. You cannot prove love by argument. You have just got to venture your whole self upon it — nothing less. That is the only way to prove its reality. If you want love, you must give your life for it; you can get it for no less. Would you take it on any other terms? Not if you are a man — or a woman! If it is worth anything to you, it is worth all you have and are and can be. And God is love! That is the way, the only way to be sure of him. "To seek the truth, wherever it leads; to live the life of love, whatever it costs — this," says one, "is to be the friend and helper of God." And it is by being his friend and helper, by living and working with him, that you get to know him, — there is no other way.

This, surely, this is the heart of it all. This is what makes life significant and beautiful and precious. This is the faith that purifies the heart and overcomes the world and lights up the future with its own unfading beam.

Let all men know that all men move
Under a canopy of love
As broad as the blue sky above;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain
And anguish, all are shadows vain, —
That death itself shall not remain;

That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth we may thread,
Through dark ways underground be led,

Yet, if we will our Guide obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way,
Shall issue out in heavenly day,

And we, on divers shores now cast,
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,
All in our Father's house at last.

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